

Parasitic, angry
and violent
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HOPE not hate

Providing a positive
antidote to hate
and intolerance

Nov-Dec 2015
Issue no. 22 Price £3.50



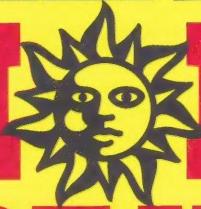
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Governments and people
turn against refugees



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HOPE not hate

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HOPE not hate is a bi-monthly publication providing information on hate groups and community initiatives to combat them.

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Perplexed

HOPE not hate has made Voter Registration its key campaign this autumn. While it might seem an unusual choice of issue, to us it is not.

Voting is the lifeblood of every democracy and being without a vote means that you cannot participate in the electoral process. It also means you are outside the electoral process and this could lead to many other problems.

When people feel helpless to make change they can become susceptible to the easy answers of extremists. When they are outside the system they feel excluded and some will turn to violence to express their dissatisfaction.

It is a no brainer that HOPE not hate is concerned that two million people could drop off the electoral register. We have led the campaign to get those dropping off the list a vote, we have run our own voter registration drives and we have convinced others to do likewise.

But throughout it all I have felt perplexed about why this wasn't a bigger issue. If the two million wasn't bad enough, there are another 7.5 million who are not on the register at all, equating to 18% of the population. As much as 27% in London.

And yet these startling statistics have done little to prod people into action. Journalists have had to be arm-twisted into covering the story and even the Labour Party, which one would think would have most to lose by this under-registration, has hardly broken into a sweat to sign up voters.

HOPE not hate intends to create the Democracy Project to continue Voter Registration and Voter Engagement in the future. Others might not care about the consequences of non-registration but we do.

IT'S ONLY JUST BEGINNING.

In the previous edition of *HOPE not hate* I predicted that the public show of solidarity evident across Europe in the immediate aftermath of the shocking images of Alan Kurdi's washed up body would be shortlived and have sadly been proved correct.

As this issue shows, there is a growing backlash from governments and people and, with the UN predicting even greater numbers of refugees coming to Europe next year, this is only likely to grow.

ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED IS EXTREMISM

The government's latest counter-extremist report is full of fine words but will be much more difficult to implement. The government has to prove that it is genuine about tackling far right extremism because, at the moment, it is not.

Given that the so-called 'Counter-Jihad' movement is far more a threat to British Muslims and community relations than a handful of nazi skinheads, the government's promise to tackle all extremism equally is a sham.

A NICE CUPPA

Please spend a minute to read the article on Page 46 about a campaign we planned in response to the Mohammad cartoon exhibition. Called Our Cup of Tea, it was a simple and ingenious way of using hope to challenge hate but it is also central to how HOPE not hate approaches potential flashpoints.

THANK YOU

Finally, I would like to say thank you to those of our supporters who donated to our Doctors of the World appeal and to our Voter Registration work. Your generosity has been greatly appreciated.

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INTERNATIONAL: US RACISTS SPREAD 'IDENTITARIAN' IDEOLOGY

HOPE not hate challenges the politics of hate and organised intolerance within society.

Initially established to counter the electoral rise of the BNP, HOPE not hate mobilises communities by providing a positive alternative to the politics of hate. Since it was founded in 2004, HOPE not hate has over 165,000 online supporters and over 150,000 followers on Facebook.

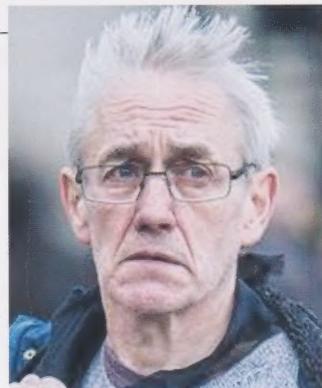
We are not aligned to any political party and will work with everyone wherever possible.

HOPE not hate comprises HOPE not hate Ltd and our charitable wing, HOPE not hate Educational Ltd.

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CONTRIBUTORS



PETE RADCLIFF

Pete Radcliff, of the We Are Raif campaign, calls for action on Saudi Arabia's human rights records



SUNDER KATWALA

British Future Director Sunder Katwala says living together is our best vengeance against IS



JOEL BUSHER

Coventry academic Joel Busher explores the motives of those who joined the EDL



**HOPE
not hate**

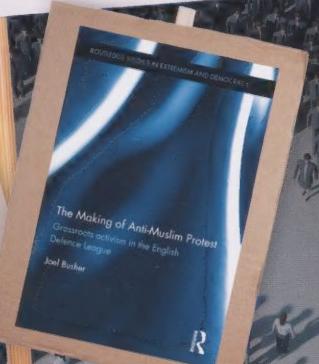
The Making of Anti-Muslim Protest

Grassroots Activism in the English Defence League

JOEL BUSHER

AVAILABLE
FOR REVIEW

If you're interested,
send an email to
politics@routledge.com



A deeply penetrating study of a movement that shatters conventional ideas of left/right and racist/antiracist. Busher's skilled and sensitive ethnography provides new insight into how the EDL created a shared world of anti-Muslim activism, and how this world unraveled in a cycle of resentments, infighting, and skepticism.

Kathleen Blee, Distinguished Professor of Sociology,
University of Pittsburgh, USA

Busher's *The Making of Anti-Muslim Protest: Grassroots Activism in the English Defence League* is a masterful piece of story-telling, sewn together with solid theoretical insights into the individual and ecological dynamics that help to explain the rise, fall, and continuity of the EDL. This "boots on the ground" approach allows us to hear clearly how members at once distanced themselves from "racist" identities while nonetheless avowing "racist" sentiments.

Professor Barbara Perry,
University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Canada

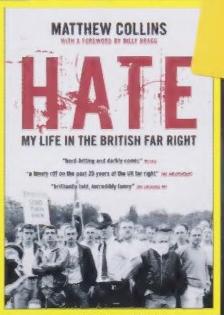
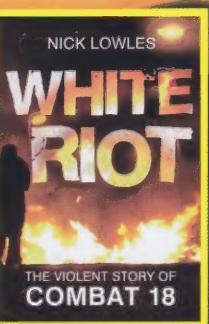
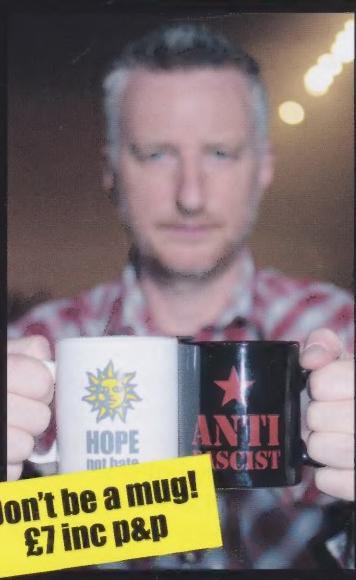
Approachably written and closely observed, this book gets inside the life world of EDL activists – a bunch of people more complicated and varied than commonly imagined. Anyone wishing to understand the complexity and the contradictions at the heart of the English Defence League should read Joel Busher's fascinating book.

Tim Bale, Professor of Politics,
Queen Mary University of London, UK

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BNP splits again

IN THE SAME WEEK the British National Party (BNP) got a jump on its rival Britain First by announcing its candidate for Mayor of London*, the party suffered, potentially, its most damaging split yet.

By way of excusing its complete cessation of activities, the party told the BBC that it had been "rebuilding and modernising" but the reality has been a dark and destructive purging of activists up and down the country.

The Salford and Blackpool branches of the party have been forced out while defeated leadership candidate Paul Hilliard and former councillor Cathy Duffy have been ostracised. Jack Sen, the surprise and much-publicised defector from UKIP in July, lasted only until October before launching a bitter attack on what he felt was the "Zionist" nature of the party, in particular on party employee and



(left) Jack Sen with Croation fascist author Tomislav Suni

webmaster Chris Barnett, who was also the subject of a hysterical attack by former leader Nick Griffin who claims there is a militant homosexual mafia at work in the BNP's head office.

Sen set up "British Renaissance", a website with similar interests to Jeremy

Bedford Turner and the London Forum, before launching his attack on the party. He was been joined in the attack on Barnett by London regional organiser and pornographer, Steve Squire, who has been permanently frustrated in his attempts upgrade his position to Deputy Chairman.

The leading troika of party leader Adam Walker, treasurer Clive Jefferson and "special adviser" Patrick

Harrington, who are running the party, have remained silent during

the rumpus so it is unclear which part of these defections, attacks and dissatisfactions they have engineered. In the BNP, "modernisation" appears to be a synonym for impending upheavals and expulsions.

* Far right mayoral candidates

BOTH THE British National Party and Britain First have declared their candidates for the London Mayoral election next year.

David Furness (pictured) will be the BNP candidate and Paul Golding will be standing for Britain First.



Action demanded against Labour MP

LABOUR HAS BEEN called on to take "firm" disciplinary action against veteran MP Sir Gerald Kaufman following his claims about "Jewish money" influencing Conservative policy.



Speaking at a Palestine Return Centre event in Parliament in October, Kaufman said that the British government had become more pro-Israel in recent years, declaring: "It's Jewish money, Jewish donations to the Conservative Party – as in the general election in May – support from the *Jewish Chronicle*, all of those things, bias the Conservatives."

Former HOPE not hate deputy director, Ruth Smeeth, now MP for Stoke North, said: "I think that these are not just unfortunate, but these are disgraceful remarks from the Father of the House and they cannot go unanswered."

After four days of silence, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn described Kaufman's speech as "unacceptable and deeply regrettable". However, many MPs and Jewish community organisations have said that these words do not go far enough.

US nazi banned from UK

THE HOME SECRETARY has banned American nazi Matt Heimbach from visiting the UK to give a series of speeches at lunches with the British far right.



HOPE not hate broke the news of his planned visit last month.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Centre, Heimbach, who is considered to be "the face of a new generation of white nationalists", founded a campus chapter of Youth for Western Civilization at Towson University in Maryland and later started the White Student Union there.

He also has been a member of the neo-Confederate League of the South. Since graduating in the spring of 2013, he has entrenched himself further in the white nationalist movement and become a regular speaker on the radical right lecture circuit.

Heimbach was due to speak at an event organised by Jack Sen in Southport.

I'm sorry



JORDAN HORNER (pictured), once a key lieutenant in Anjem Choudary's Al-Muhajiroun network, claims to have turned his back on extremism and has apologised for past actions.

Speaking to Sky News last month, Horner said he was wrong to force his religion onto other people and he apologised for the distress it had caused.

He was jailed for 17 months in December 2013 after being found guilty to charges of assault and of using threatening words and behaviour. "I apologise to the individuals that I did harass and attack. Somebody who makes mistakes never recognises they're making a mistake until they analyse what they've done after they've done it," he explained.

Horner also admitted that his actions could have caused Islamophobia and, for the past year, has been working with the Unity Initiative that claims to have reformed 20 extremists in the past six years.

We fear for our lives

A NEW REPORT by academics Imran Awan and Dr Irene Zempi highlights the human toll exacted by anti-Muslim hatred. Entitled: *We Fear For Our Lives: Online and Offline Anti-Muslim Hostility in Britain*, the report reveals the real human stories behind hate crime statistics.

"The overall aim of our report was to examine the impacts of online and offline anti-Muslim hate crime and give a voice to the Muslim men and women whose stories about hate crime are often overlooked or never heard," Imran Awan wrote on *Huffington Post*.

The report found that those with "visible" Muslim identity, such as headscarves or traditional dress, were more vulnerable to anti-Muslim hostility,

Bake off, Lights on



Nadiya Jamir Hussain
Photo: BBC

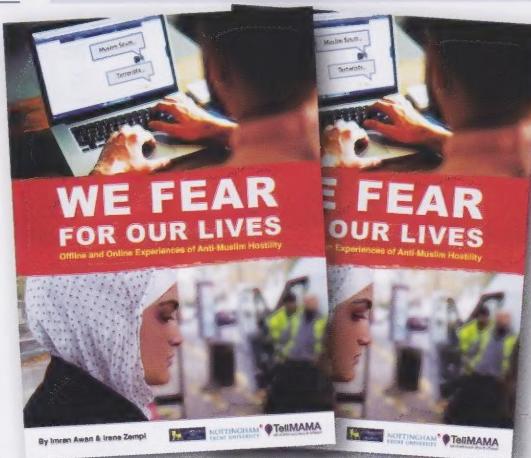
LATER THIS MONTH, BBC Bake Off winner Nadiya Jamir Hussain will turn on the Christmas lights in Luton town centre in an event that will be cheered by people across the city's communities.

Nadiya won the hearts of the British public not just for her baking skills but her good humour, warm personality and cheerful demeanour.

Born and brought up in Luton, she later moved to West Yorkshire

where she now lives. Nadiya said: "I love coming back to Luton so was honoured to be asked to switch on the town's festive lights and be part of such a wonderful community event."

Lutonians have been so supportive of me and it's going to be great to see thousands of people come together and enjoy a very special occasion which celebrates Luton and its communities."



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- Special report: Cold chill page 16



NETHERLANDS | Pegida "launched" in The Netherlands

FROM JEROEN BOSCH IN AMSTERDAM FOR ALERT!

EDWIN WAGENSVELD, an organiser of marches by the racist Pegida movement in Germany, "launched" the racist ragbag of Pegida Nederland in Utrecht on 11 October. It was a flop. The Dutchman, resident in Germany, apparently sees bigger potential for Pegida among the Dutch than among the Germans. Together with Raffie Chohan, who heads the one-woman outfit, the Dutch Defense League (not to be confused with the former Dutch Defence League), Wagensveld wanted to march through Utrecht, waving Israeli and European flags. Under pressure from various counter-protests, the city's major banned the march but gave permission for two rallies – one anti-racist – at two squares in Utrecht's inner city.

From the start, anti-racist activists disturbed the Pegida speeches (from, among others top Dresden racist Lutz Bachmann and former EDL leader Stephen Yaxley-Lennon) with heckling and slogans and were attacked by some of the two hundred-plus assembled Pegida fans. The latter included at least 50 Germans, a delegation from Flanders, some Polish right-wing extremists and assorted Dutch fascists.

The legal authorities are now investigating Chohan's inflammatory speech after she ranted about "massive inbreeding in Islamic culture". Wagensveld, very frustrated that the launch of Pegida was a flop, has announced that he will return to Utrecht in early November.



Tommy Robinson in Utrecht bei Pegida Nederland 11.10.15

GERMANY | Racist movement on the horizon?

FROM MICHAEL KLEIN IN LEIPZIG

With hundred thousands of refugees seeking shelter in Germany and chancellor Merkel denying that a halt to this movement is possible, racist and nationalist sentiment is finding expression in a growing number of rallies, principally in eastern Germany, with places such as Dresden, Leipzig and Erfurt heading the list.

After relative calm in the summer, the numbers on these "protests" have again topped 10,000. Particular danger comes from the Alternative for Germany (AfD) which has shifted further right after a split in July and is heavily mobilising in pursuit of a bloc with the racist Pegida groups that were at the forefront of an eruption of nationalist and xenophobic clamour in late 2014.

While the AfD has risen to 6% in the most recent national election polls and stands at 13% in Saxony – with a further 5% there for the nazi National Democratic Party – the anti-refugee rallies also offer a speaking opportunity for extreme rightists like Götz Kubitschek to call for civil disobedience to stop refugees crossing the German border.

A first anniversary demonstration by PEGIDA in Dresden on 19 November attracted 19,000 people, well below the numbers expected. At the same time, the racists were opposed by as many counter-demonstrators, the biggest show of direct opposition in the city yet.

On 7 November, though, 5,000 AfD supporters marched in Berlin to demand Merkel's resignation.



Weapons seized by police during swoops on homes and offices of Nazis in 2005

SPAIN | Acquitted nazis demand the return of weapons

BY SANDRA CORTÉS FOR ANTIFEIXISTES.ORG IN VALÈNCIA

SOME OF THE 19 nazis tried for, *inter alia*, arms offences and acquitted by the Spanish courts last year have demanded return of weapons seized by police during swoops on their homes and offices in 2005.

A judge acquitted the nazis last year after ruling that telephone conversations recorded by police were not admissible evidence, despite having been authorised by the investigating judge after establishing that the group being investigated, the Antisystem Front (FAS), was selling banned weapons on a web page. In 2005, the same judge acquitted another nazi gang, the National Socialist Armageddon Brotherhood, charged in Valencia with

attacking several political premises in 2000.

The police operation against the FAS, tagged Operation Panzer, dismantled a nazi gang dedicated to the sale of weapons and preparing attacks against anti-fascists and immigrants. Among those arrested were three soldiers, a fascist España2000 councillor in Silla (València) and the murderer of the young anti-fascist Guillem Agulló in 1993. As the Civil Guard destroyed the FAS' weapons "by mistake" two weeks before the trial, the nazis' request for return of the weapons is highly embarrassing to the State which may end up having to pay compensation.

GERMANY | Stabbed politician elected mayor

PRO-MIGRANT German politician Henriette Reker, who was knifed in the neck by a nazi on 17 October and is still recovering from emergency life-saving surgery, has been elected mayor of Cologne.

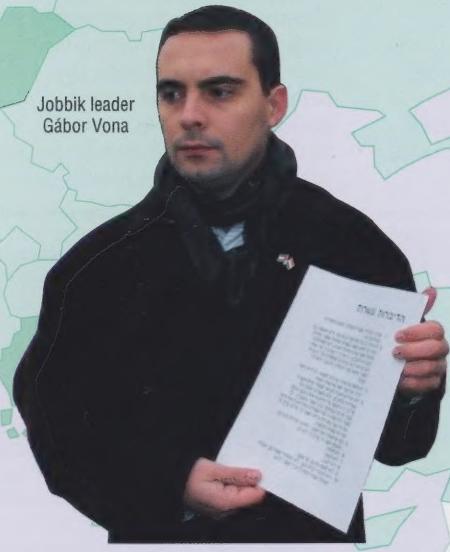
An independent candidate backed by Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative Christian Democratic Union, she took 52.7% of the votes to beat six other candidates. Reker, 58, was attacked while running a party information stall in Cologne. Four other people - two local politicians and two members of the public - were also wounded. Following

Sweden
Democrats MP
Martin Kinnunen



Anton Lundin-Pettersson

Jobbik leader
Gábor Vona



the assault, members of all parties and local citizens held a rally in solidarity with Reker in the city's main shopping area.

Police said the 44-year-old attacker, Frank Steffen, a man whose nazi history goes back to the early 1990s when he became active with the FAP, then a leading nationwide fascist organisation, faces charges of attempted murder and grievous bodily harm.

He is believed to have been enraged with Reker because she supported asylum seekers seeking refuge in Germany's fourth largest city. When police searched his home they found nothing. The disks of his computers had been removed together with papers and ID documents in an attempt to avoid any traces.

SWEDEN | Top Sweden Democrat charged

FROM DANIEL VERGARA FOR EXPO IN STOCKHOLM

FAR RIGHT Sweden Democrats (SD) MP Martin Kinnunen has been charged with tax offences and accounting violations.

If found guilty, he could face six years behind bars. The same company, Framtid och Samtid – that produces the SD's news magazine on the web – is now also under police investigation. Framtid och Samtid is owned by another SD commercial venture, Blåsippa, controlled by leading SD members, including party leader Jimmie Åkesson. Kinnunen, a former SD press secretary, is the sole board member of Framtid och Samtid.

His manoeuvres were put under the microscope after the tax authorities noticed the company had filed no sales tax in 2013 when an estimated

£72,652 was due. In 2014, the firm's tax return was also wrong and a further tax debt of £48,694 was left unpaid. Together with Kinnunen, a former SD executive member is accused of aiding and abetting the alleged offences. The whole fraud story has clear ties to the heart of the SD via the party's ownership of the mother company, Blåsippa.

The probe is also looking into payments to Erik Almqvist, infamous for hurling racist abuse and waving iron bars about in a racist incident in Stockholm five years ago.

He subsequently left parliament in disgrace but was paid £294,508 for "work" as a consultant for Samtid och Framtid when, in fact, it was probably severance pay on which more tax should have been paid.

SWEDEN | School killer was fascist

ANTON LUNDIN-PETTERSSON, the 21-year-old who murdered a teacher and a pupil and wounded others in a sword rampage at a school in Trollhättan in late October, had expressed clear far right sympathies on social media. The police are reportedly investigating a possible political motive for the attacks. They do not have to look far.

Earlier in October, Lundin-Pettersson had shown clear sympathies for extreme right-wing and anti-immigrant movements.

On his YouTube channel, he "liked" several videos by an influential

Swedish fascist blogger and commentator who is active in both Swedish and international far-right media. On some of the blogger's YouTube films he talks about "the hellish multicultural project" and describes himself as an opponent of "Jewish control of the media in western civilization".

On his own YouTube, Lundin-Pettersson also "liked" videos glorifying Nazi Germany and, on his Facebook account, displayed sympathies for the racist Sweden Democrats' campaign for a national referendum on immigration.

HUNGARY | The world changes: Hungarian far right loves the police

FROM ISTVÁN TÓTH IN BUDAPEST

THE HUNGARIAN far right now no longer regards the police as enemies but as friends as a result of its role in tackling migrants. According to the Hungarian nationalist news portal (nemzetiarcvonal.net) Hungarians now have to fight against the "aliens" and the "advance of rat people".

Soon after this diatribe and with the refugee crisis hitting Hungary, the far right Jobbik launched a propaganda offensive claiming: "The situation of the police is unsustainable in the frontier zone." Jobbik politicians then staged press conferences with titles like "Appreciation to the police facing the refugee influx." Party leader Gábor

Vona even issued a communiqué saying that "Jobbik is grateful to the forces protecting our country" and thanking the police for having "courageously defended the Hungarian people's safety".

The nazi paramilitary Betyársereg (Outlaw's Army), meanwhile, has also done a U-turn. This mob which has constantly scolded the police in the past thought it was time to put aside its "disagreements" and issued a new and very imaginative slogan: "Europe is for the white race!" The fascist Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement, closely allied with Jobbik, has likewise adopted this new, police-friendly strategy.

- For the latest international news visit <http://hopenothate.org.uk/news/world/> or scan the QR code right >>

- US racists spread 'Identitarian' ideology p38



USA | Communities across US show up against anti-Muslim hate

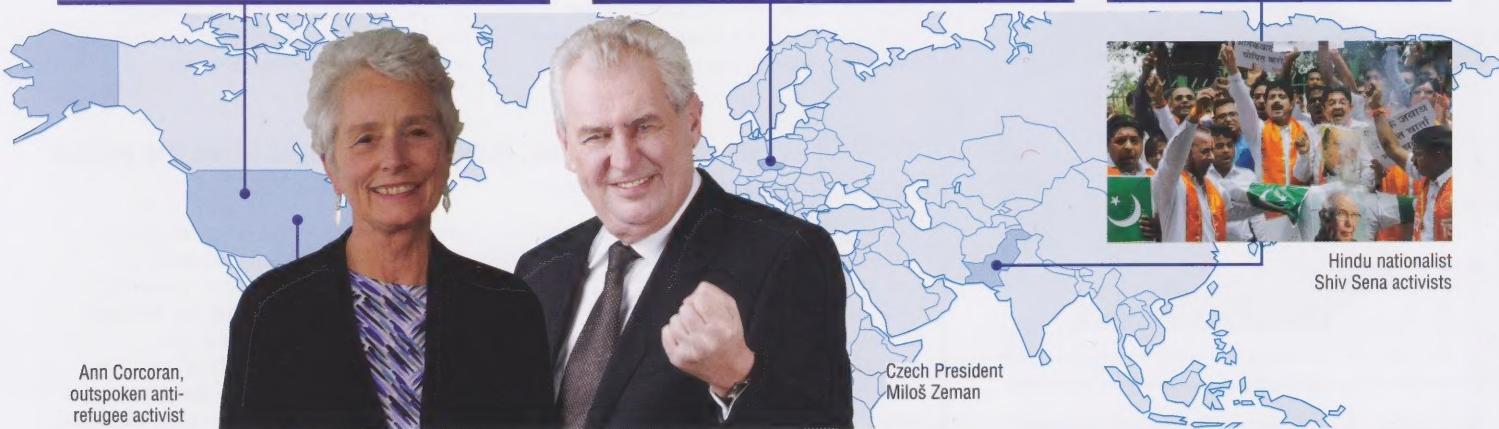
FROM THE CENTRE FOR NEW COMMUNITY IN CHICAGO

IN A SHOW OF SOLIDARITY, interfaith leaders and community activists spoke out against anti-Muslim hatred online and in front of mosques around the country this October.

A loosely co-ordinated network of anti-Muslim activists used Facebook to announce and organise a misleadingly named Global Rally for Humanity, encouraging "fellow patriots" to stand in front of mosques armed with guns. As many as 35 events had been announced in the days leading up to the rally but most failed to materialise.

The largest demonstrations were in Phoenix, Arizona, where one news reporter estimated about 200 anti-Muslim protesters and counter-protesters. The event also drew a handful of nazis. Elsewhere, few protesters showed up. Meanwhile, Muslims and their allies in several cities responded by hosting community dialogues, planting trees and even distributing water to the lonely protesters.

Though the protests failed, these events were not planned in a vacuum. Anti-Muslim rhetoric has become commonplace among the early contenders to become the next president of the United States. One leading candidate recently said a Muslim should not be eligible to become president, even though the Constitution says otherwise. And anti-Muslim hate crimes are still five times more common than they were before 2001 and even that is considered to be an underestimate.



USA | Anti-Refugee Sentiment Makes Its Way To The USA

FROM SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTRE IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

ON 10 SEPTEMBER, the US government announced plans to resettle a further 10,000 Syrian refugees in the USA within the next fiscal year, prompting an angry reaction from anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and white nationalist groups in the US, mimicking the slaver of their European counterparts.

Their general message is to paint the refugee crisis as a "Muslim invasion," with many evoking the name of Charles Martel, the Frenchman who, according to legend, halted the advances of the

CZECH REPUBLIC | Czech president addresses anti-Muslim mob

CZECH PRESIDENT Miloš Zeman heaped shame on himself and his country on the 25th anniversary of the 1989 fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia by delivering an anti-migrant speech, in Prague's Albertov University Quarter, to a mob of anti-Muslim, anti-refugee racists – including one-time English Defence League chief, "Tommy Robinson" – known as the Anti-Islamic Bloc (AIB).

Zeman's fleeting appearance there, to the delight of the racists, followed an address at another, 5,000-strong, rally at which he was roundly jeered and pelted with eggs and tomatoes by human rights activists accusing him of betraying the "Velvet Revolution".

The embarrassment of Zeman, who was surrounded by Slovak President Andrej Kiska, Hungarian President János Áder, Polish President Bronisław Komorowski and German President Joachim Gauck at the first event, was palpable. Evidently, he found the later company of Robinson's racist rabble far more congenial but what impression it left on his top-level guests has not yet become clear.

The AIB had called on its activists via its Facebook page to "support our President in his anti-refugee and anti-Muslim views and even switched its demonstration to Albertov to coincide with Zeman's presence. In its reports on extremism, the Czech Home Office characterises the AIB as an association of extreme-right wing organisations that deliberately uses distorted and manipulated information for electoral advantage.

PAKISTAN | Indian fascists condemned

PAKISTAN PEOPLES Party (PPP) parliamentarian Faiza Malik has filed a resolution in the Punjab Assembly slamming the activities of the ultra-right Hindu nationalist organisation Shiv Sena. The resolution states that the activities of Shiv Sena have put the safety of Muslims and followers of other religions in India at risk. In particular, it condemns the violent storming of the Indian Cricket Board's HQ in Mumbai by 40 to 50 Shiv Sena activists over a scheduled meeting between Pakistan and Indian cricket officials to revive cricketing ties between the two countries. The meeting was cancelled following the attack.

Malik's resolution further demands that the United Nations ban Shiv Sena and declare it a terrorist organisation. Earlier, Shiv Sena activists had attacked Sudheendra Kulkarni, the organiser of a book launch in Mumbai for former Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Kasuri, saying any engagement with Pakistan is unacceptable. Shiv Sena is allied with the ruling BJP in India and governs the Indian state of Maharashtra with Indian prime minister Narendra Modi's party.

Muslim Umayyads in Europe in 732 CE. The current anti-refugee organising and rhetoric comes at a time when anti-Muslim sentiment has reached a fever pitch in the States.

Ann Corcoran, one of the most outspoken anti-refugee activists, has solidified her relationship with prominent and influential anti-Muslim groups over the past year and, combined, they are busily opposing Syrian refugee relocation. Corcoran encourages grassroots "pockets of

resistance" efforts like the one in Twin Falls, Idaho, where anti-Muslim activists are calling for the closure of a refugee in the name of combating Sharia law.

Sadly, anti-refugee babbles is also prevalent in the mainstream, where Republican presidential candidates, most notably frontrunner Donald Trump, have added fuel to the fire. Trump recently claimed that "strong men" from Syria are the only refugees being admitted.

Guest column...

Free Raif Badawi

By Pete Radcliff

LAST MONTH a coalition of groups and individuals established a campaign for free speech and human rights in Saudi Arabia. It was set up with the support of HOPE not hate and 11 other NGOs that have been campaigning over the summer against Saudi human rights abuses.

It has called itself "We are Raif" in tribute to Saudi blogger Raif Badawi who is currently in jail in Jeddah facing another 950 lashes for blogging his criticisms of the religious intolerance of the Saudi regime.

The campaign calls on the British government to end the sales of UK arms and military equipment, including military support packages, to Saudi Arabia.

It also calls for pressure on the Saudi government to release political prisoners and end both human rights abuses domestically as well as its complicity with human rights abuses in the region.

The world has been shocked this year by revelations about the Saudi justice system, in particular the treatment of the young liberally minded Saudi blogger, Raif Badawi.

Raif had dared to voice his concerns about the religious intolerance of the Saudi regime and the propagation of those ideas throughout the world. He also blogged his concern about the fact that it was Saudis who made up the majority of those who planned and committed the 9/11 atrocity.

In response, the Saudi regime arrested him in 2012 and charged him with a number of crimes, sentencing him to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes. It was when those lashes started on 9 January, only two days after the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre, that the outrage began.

There had been quite legitimate outrage over the horrific brutality of ISIS in Syria and Iraq but

silence over similar brutality in Saudi Arabia.

In both regimes those who criticise, those who are accused of renouncing their faith, those who are homosexual or deemed to have broken the strict sexual mores of Wahhabist *Sharia* Law are treated brutally, often by execution. There is no semblance of free speech. Human rights, women's rights are trampled on.

If the rise of *Daesh* (ISIS) has affected Saudi Arabia, it has been for its regime to become even more brutal. This year Saudi Arabia has doubled its execution rate with 142 judicially murdered so far.

The only difference of substance between Saudi Arabia, on the one hand, and *Al Qaeda* and *Daesh*, on the other, is their different relationship with powerful states in Europe and with the USA.

Western governments, of which Britain is prominent, say nothing critical about Saudi Arabia's shameful human rights record. In return, oil and arms deals are made with the oil-rich dictatorship, generating huge profits for Western economies. More depressingly, Saudi Arabia is treated as a strategic regional partner.

The Saudi promotion of brutal religious sectarianism throughout the so-called "Muslim world" does not alarm the US and UK. Its funding of mosques and Muslim schools (*madrassas*) and its influence over them helps the creation of reactionary political parties and political influence over governments.

Women, religious minorities, those wanting secular democracy and equality suffer in those countries. But Saudi Arabia is a Western ally and so nothing is done, not even after Osama Bin Laden, himself a prominent member of the Saudi super-rich, formed



Saudi blogger
Raif Badawi

Al Qaeda with recruits gained from Saudi Arabia's world-wide indoctrination machine.

Those propagating "war on terror" created the recruits and foreign fighters for *Al Qaeda* and now *Daesh*.

And it is not only inspiration that Saudi Arabia gives *Daesh* in Syria and Iraq. At the height of *Daesh*'s expansion, Saudis were alleged to comprise up to 65% of its foreign fighters and provide a significant part of its funding.

The Saudi regime will know a lot about the extensive pro-*Daesh*/pro-*Al Qaeda* activity in its country. They are concerned about *Daesh* – as a competitor – and so may share some intelligence on that with the UK and USA.

David Cameron uses this argument to justify ignoring Saudi Arabia's record on human rights. On the contrary, it should be an argument to bring economic and political pressure to help democrats challenge Saudi Arabia to stop its direct and indirect promotion of religious sectarianism and terror across the world.

The horrors of the refugee crisis have rightly shaken Europe but questions have to be asked

about what the British government is doing to stop the forces of religious intolerance and war that fuel the crisis throughout the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia has played a prominent role in a massive escalation in religious warfare throughout the Middle East, particularly in Syria and Yemen, where the two sectarian states of Iran and Saudi Arabia vie for regional influence.

In many countries in Europe, especially Sweden, there have been growing calls for action on the arms trade with Saudi Arabia.

In September, the Labour Party and Jeremy Corbyn criticised the imminent execution of Ali Al-Nimr, a member of Saudi's Shi'ite minority, arrested at the age of 17 after demonstrating during the "Arab Spring" for equality.

Corbyn also called the bid for a contract with Saudi prisons to be withdrawn – which after public pressure Cameron did. In October, the EU awarded Raif Badawi the prestigious Sakharov prize.

After decades of silence, with the rise of violent religious sectarianism, it is surely the time for further action.

■ Details of "We are Raif: Coalition for Free Speech and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia" can be found at the website at <http://WeAreRaifUK.org> or emailing WeAreRaifUK@gmail.com

WE STAND TOGETHER

The awful terrorist attacks in Paris, coming so soon after the refugee crisis, might prove to herald a seismic shift in public attitudes across Europe towards Muslims and refugees.

At the same time though, huge numbers of ordinary people took part in activities to show their solidarity. Some attended public events, many more made simple but very symbolic gestures like changing their Facebook profile photos.

HOPE not hate asked a range of people for their views on the Paris attacks and their potential consequences.

Living together is our best vengeance

By Sunder Katwala

THEY KILLED people of every race, many faiths and from a dozen nations.

When ISIS terrorists launched Friday's indiscriminate attacks in Paris, that was the point. Nothing threatens the twisted worldview of these Islamist killers more than our ability to mix, to build a common life that binds together those who come from different places.

The same was true of the 7/7 bombings in London. We marked the tenth anniversary of those horrific attacks only a few months ago but we all know this could happen again.

We rely on our governments to protect our lives and liberties but it is up to us to make our society more resilient against threats to divide us. Those motivated to oppose hatred and prejudice should recognise that these two things are, for now, true at the same time:

Firstly, the most clear and present fascist threat to our societies today comes from this virulent strand of violent Islamism. Its hatred of the societies we are today matches that of any other fascist and we must be no less vocal in rejecting it.

Secondly, those most likely to face prejudice and discrimination in our society today are British Muslims.

A central strategic aim of Islamist extremism is to stoke up anti-Muslim prejudice in western societies. It seeks to split us: to make Muslim and non-Muslim citizens alike feel that we cannot live together peacefully.

We can prove them wrong by doing just that, living side-by-side, together.



#Not in my name

So this is about "them and us" – about our peaceful, shared society and the fascists who would tear it apart.

That shared sense of "us" can't come from any single group; it has to be an inclusive identity that we act on together.

If it feels like it is about British society against our Muslim fellow citizens, then we will all lose. British Muslims must be a major part of the solution. They have a unique legitimacy in challenging

claims that these murderers act in the name of Islam.

But we all need our calls to action, setting out what being part of a shared society means and promoting contact between citizens of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds.

Those killed in Paris loved the life of a Friday night as much their killers love death.

Living together is our best vengeance.

The twin threat facing France

Anne Louis of the anti-fascist project La Horde examines the challenges



CONFRONTED WITH the exceptionally brutal and murderous Islamist attacks that shook Paris and the whole of France on 13 November, the right is now emerging to play on the fears and misunderstandings that the assaults have generated, claiming to have prophesied this appalling situation and wanting to impose its own draconian xenophobic solutions.

At the front of the queue are Marine Le Pen and the Front National (FN) whose anti-Muslim, anti-migrant activities, worrying even before the attacks, will accelerate, offering a bleak future, not only for anti-fascists and anti-racists but, more broadly, the social climate in France.

The attacks, designed mainly to terrorise, also aimed at pushing the French towards the FN, creating social tensions and inciting and escalating racist violence.

The first trend to be seen will be a liberation of

racist speech and public trivialisation of the danger from extreme right. It is notable that the most radical reactions to the atrocities actually came from the ranks of the right of ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy's Republicans, channelling public anxiety onto refugees and Muslims.

Nadine Morano who, in September, described France as a "white country" paints migrants as an "army of young men who arrive in Europe", likening the current migration to a military offensive while Laurent Wauquiez, the Republicans' general secretary and Eric Ciotti, Sakozy's security advisor, advocate incarceration of all persons (about 4,000 people) – suspected of Islamism by the intelligence services – in "internment centres".

The FN, with a few exceptions and apart from Le Pen's initial wild statement about "annihilating" Islamist radicals, has kept a curiously

low and "respectable" profile because its strategy is not about getting noticed but being regarded, in the run up to the 2017 presidential elections, as "responsible" enough to lead France.

Thus, when president François Hollande received the leaders of political parties, including Marine Le Pen and her lieutenants, Florian Philippot and Nicolas Bay, on 15 November, he was granting the FN "normalised" party status.

When the FN suspended its regional elections campaign, even though the elections *will* be held, it killed two birds with one stone: presenting itself as "decent" while being sure to reap the electoral fruits of the current climate of fear.

A second likely shift will be towards curbs on democratic freedom. Even before the attacks of ISIS/Daesh, enhanced controls were installed at the borders to block arrival of radical environmental activists to

The Eiffel Tower was lit up in France's tricolour following the attacks in Paris
Photo from flickr JP2H

demonstrate during COP21.

With the establishment of a state of emergency, all public events have been banned for at least six days in Paris, preventing any gatherings, as well as commemorative protests.

Other options that the state of emergency gives the government (potentially restricting freedom of the press, establishing curfews, etc.) respond both to the supposedly new security imperatives and the political imperative of "national unity", suppressing any discordant voices.

Finally, social struggles and solidarity will almost be on "hold". With racist clamour propagated by the extreme right and the conservatives getting louder and tough security crackdowns, solidarity will be curtailed.

But solidarity with migrants and refugees fleeing ISIS/Daesh terror in their countries – without forgetting the responsibility of Western countries for the war – is more urgent than ever.

Marine Le Pen and her extreme right friends who will enthusiastically capitalise on the horrifying tragedy of 13 November have to be fought tooth-and-nail. No racist so-called "slip" of the tongue should be forgotten and no politicians who think they can get elected by stoking people's fears should be forgiven.

Le Pen and her racists and the ISIS/Daesh terrorist fanatics want to divide us. To defend our rights and freedoms, we must not let that happen.

Let's come together

By Vakas Hussain



Interfaith service at
Leeds Cathedral

AS I WAS watching the events unfold in Paris I felt numb, but I was also raging inside at the mass murder and bloodshed I was witnessing. Whilst it was fairly clear early on that this attack was carried out by a so-called Islamic group, deep down I was hoping that this was not the case. Reason being that I knew that Islam and ordinary British Muslims would again be at the centre of the media glare. Our loyalty to Britain and wider Europe would be questioned. Our respect and adherence to democracy would be challenged.

All this despite the fact that polling shows the vast majority of Muslims are proud of their British identity and well integrated into British/European societies.

I understand people are angry. I am too. They want answers to questions like why do "these people" commit such bloodshed in the name of Islam? What separates the Islam followed by the majority of Muslims from these barbarians?

This is understandable. However, the worst thing we can do is turn on one another. This is what the terrorists want. When ISIS and like-minded groups carry out these atrocities, they know full well that Muslims in Europe

will face a backlash and, in turn, they [the so-called Islamic extremist groups] will be able to peddle the lie that the West is at war with Islam.

Therefore, we must come together more closely than ever before. The bond between Muslim and non-Muslim communities needs to be strengthened so that it is unbreakable. One thing we all agree on is that we do not want the terrorists to win. But if we cannot come together as a single body then the terrorists will win.

Those who commit these crimes hate our multicultural, pluralistic and integrated societies. They harbour a desire to destroy the way we live with one another. We should never forget this point.

However, if people think that attacking ordinary Muslims or mosques is a way of getting their own back on these radicals then this is madness. This is what ISIS and co. are wanting and waiting for.

Do not play into their hands. If you do, then they will win. If you really want to show solidarity with the people who were sadly killed, let us celebrate our rich diversity and our unity. This is the greatest antidote to violence and extremism. This is how we win!

■ VAKAS HUSSAIN is Press Officer for British Muslim Youth

A commun

Peter Adams writes on
14 November

IT WOULD be fair to say we've had a lot of experience responding to local, national and international events and issues in Luton and that we are continually learning what to do. So after Paris, by Saturday lunchtime there were already statements from local council, police, the Muslim community and our local Council of Faiths.

My first response on seeing the Muslim statement was, "This says it all, I don't need to say more." In fact, a response did later appear, and it was important, but my response was important too: we respect and trust each other. We talk, even about challenging stuff.

In Spring 2009, when the events that led to the formation of the EDL were in process in Luton, a number of us made a commitment to work so that

Co-operate with the authorities

Sameea Jonnud

WHEN NEWS BREAKS of attacks such as those that took place in Paris on 13 November, horrific as they are, the sadness and shock Muslims join the world in feeling can be quickly mixed up with an irrational sense of guilt. We have become conditioned to terrorist atrocities followed by criticism of Islam and Muslims.

When the news from Paris broke that Friday night, the thoughts of many Muslims were filled with horror at the panic and death on the streets of a European capital city. As a Briton I can empathise with the shock felt by Parisians.

As details emerged of attackers shouting about Syria, the horror was joined by dismay at another attack by Muslim extremists and the inevitable reactions this would provoke.

Stories have since emerged of verbal abuse being directed at Muslims, and

Community response to Paris

the extremes did not pull us apart, especially as Christian and Muslim leaders but to do all we could to grow in understanding and relationship.

It didn't begin then either: 9/11, 7/7 both saw robust responses from faith leaders. But the challenges of the EDL based in our town made it such we had to deepen and broaden our community resilience.

It's been challenging but worth it. As we've prepared for big demos we've had tens of leaders from across the community working closely with police and council. That in itself means policing is as much about cohesion as it is about public order policing.

Community working together when hatred strikes humanises and personalises those the extremists would marginalise, demonise and

ultimately kill. In the good times we talk together, eat together, widen our relationships. When the bad comes, we draw on those relationships.

This morning in church a poem, the voice of a Muslim teenage girl in our town, was read. We wept. We prayed. And we know our story will be told in her mosque.

Tomorrow, we will all gather from all communities for a vigil. Ties in the community will be strengthened a little bit more. And so, in the face of the evil of Paris, our community has been unified just a little bit more. We reflect, soberly, that we are probably practising for when the terror is closer. But even then the resilience in our community will be tested but not broken. We will stand together.

PETER ADAMS is a community interfaith worker from Luton

Walking through a crowded place,
Judgemental stares
Apparent on every face,
For actions taken in my name,
You think I am a disgrace,
You refuse my hand
You ignore my embrace
What did I do to deserve this hate?

I wear a headscarf,
My Dad has a beard,
You mock me and say I'm weird,
I fast,
I pray,
I volunteer,
Yet still I am unwelcome here,
Practising my faith in constant fear.

Terrorists deface Islam as they
Ravage and ruin the common man,
This is not my faith and not my Islam,
Don't assume it is, we are about salaam,
Don't hold me accountable for the insane,
As all around you will see the same.

This poem was written by
Anna Kayani, 14 years old, of Luton



since it is women who are most visibly Muslim they have often borne the brunt of it. There has also been a lot of online abuse against Muslims and Islam in social media and newspapers both by writers and commentators.

However it has been heartening to see positive comments emerge, for example the #MuslimsAreNotTerrorist Twitter posts. Many people including journalists immediately began to comment that all Muslims should not be tarred with the same brush and it is reasonable attitudes such as this that will lessen tension between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Community relations have become

strained in the past with claims that Muslims do not integrate into society, support extremism and allow it to survive by turning a blind eye and not speaking up against it.

However this state of affairs is changing as Muslims, both individuals and spokespersons for organisations, now openly condemn extremism. Muslims in Britain can defuse anti-Islamic hatred by publicly stating that practices of groups such as ISIS are not true Islam.

Co-operation with the authorities is of great importance. If we have to have added security checks we need to remember it is for the safety of all of us.

Finally, Muslims must ensure they do not allow extremist views to flourish by keeping an eye on what young people are doing and teaching them to be proud British Muslims who interact with and make a contribution to the society.

We can apply the words of the phrase "united we stand, divided we fall" to interfaith and community relations as by understanding and accepting one another we can work for the betterment of society.

SAMEEA JONNUD is Muslim activist from Aldershot

EUROPE'S COLD CHILL

Even before Paris, Europe was turning against refugees

By Elisabeth Pop

AUSTRIA: Austria's far right Freedom Party (FPÖ) won over 30% of the votes and came second in Vienna and some other state elections. Polls show it is the second most popular party in Austria, but still lags behind the ruling Social Democrats. Mirroring developments in Hungary, the FPÖ has called for a border fence for Austria and stricter border controls.

BULGARIA: Bulgaria's Orthodox Church called on its government to prevent a Muslim "invasion". "We help refugees who have already arrived in our Motherland, but the government must absolutely not let more refugees in", church officials wrote on their website, adding that the problems in the refugees' countries of origin "must be resolved by those who created them and the Bulgarian people must not pay the price by disappearing."

CROATIA: Croatia's interior minister Ranko Ostojić said his country cannot accept any more people after 7,300 people crossed the border in 48 hours. Croatia's president Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović asked the army to be ready, if necessary, to protect its borders.

CZECH REPUBLIC: Czech President Miloš Zeman warned that Muslim refugees will not respect local laws and mores but will instead seek to implement Sharia law. Only after protests did the Czech government stop arresting refugees, marking them on their forearms and detaining them for up to 42 days.

DENMARK: The Danish government has placed adverts in Lebanese newspapers with the message "Don't come to Denmark" and listing a number of factors that would make Denmark an undesirable destination for refugees.

FINLAND: Finland has announced tightened controls over its northern border in an effort to curb the flow of refugees arriving by land. In an incident in late September, around 40 Finnish racists, one dressed in Ku Klux Klan costume, attacked a bus, carrying asylum seekers from Iraq, with stones and fireworks. Arson attacks at refugee reception centres have also been reported

FRANCE: Marine Le Pen compared the 2015 refugee crisis with the "barbarian invasion" of the Fourth Century and said the only reason Germany is welcoming refugees

is because it has a "moribund population" and hence "is probably seeking to lower wages and continue to recruit slaves through mass immigration". One French MEP and member of the main French opposition right-wing party, Les Républicains, said: "We're a Judeo-Christian country of white race. We respect France. And if you don't want to adapt, you can go."

GERMANY: After initially making a positive stand to accept Syrian refugees, German leader Angela Merkel has had to tighten controls and limit new arrivals to a stay of just one year due to increased public anxiety, including voices being raised in her own coalition government. There have been at least 450 attacks, 93 of them arson, on refugee shelters in Germany this year. Two-thirds of the attacks were carried out by locals with no previous criminal record but 34 percent of the suspects were part of the fascist scene.

GREECE: The record numbers of refugees arriving on the Greek islands have put enormous strain on aid organisations who have reported "beyond horrific" conditions in camps there. Greek PM Alexis Tsipras has described the unfolding situation as a "crisis within a crisis."

HUNGARY: Hungary's ruling Fidesz party has stepped up implementation of its anti-migration rules allowing the detention of migrants in controversial camps, the speeding up of asylum assessments and limiting the possibility of appeal and has overseen the construction of barbed wire fences along the country's borders with Serbia and Croatia. Hungarian PM, Viktor Orbán said: "We shouldn't forget that the people who are coming here grew up in a different religion and represent a completely different culture. Most are not Christian, but Muslim... Is it not worrying that Europe's Christian culture is already barely able to maintain its own set of Christian values?"

ITALY: After Austria, France and Switzerland refused to settle some of the thousands of migrants entering Europe via Italy, Matteo Salvini, leader of the far right Northern League, said the country's national security is at risk because of the refugees: "TB and scabies do not come from Finland. Unfortunately, with a backward health system in North Africa, these people report illnesses that we had defeated for years".

NORWAY: Norway's immigration authorities launched an advertising campaign to deter refugees from seeking asylum in the country, including a threat to repatriate back to Kabul Afghan refugees who have crossed over from Russia.

POLAND: Jarosław Kaczyński, leader of the new ruling Law and Justice Party, said refugees have brought diseases like cholera and dysentery to Europe, as well as "all sorts of parasites and protozoa, which ... while not dangerous in the organisms of these people, could be dangerous here." 10,000 far right supporters demonstrated in several Polish cities, in September, against plans to resettle refugees in Europe and chanted slogans such as "Today refugees, tomorrow terrorists!" and "Poland, free of Islam!".

SLOVAKIA: Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico has made a number of Islamophobic statements including "Slovakia is built for Slovaks, not for minorities" and "the mass migration of Muslim immigrants who would start to build mosques will not to be tolerated" as well as calling for the "restriction of the freedom of Muslims in Europe". Faced with expulsion from the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats group in the European Parliament, Fico later denied making these comments.

SLOVENIA: In response to 110,000 refugees and migrants entering the country in just two weeks, equivalent to 5% of the country's population, the Slovenian prime minister, Miro Cerar, said "If necessary, we are ready to put up the fence immediately."

SWEDEN: Responding to public opposition to the large numbers of new arrivals, Sweden has requested other European countries take more refugees. A number of buildings designated to house refugees have been attacked.

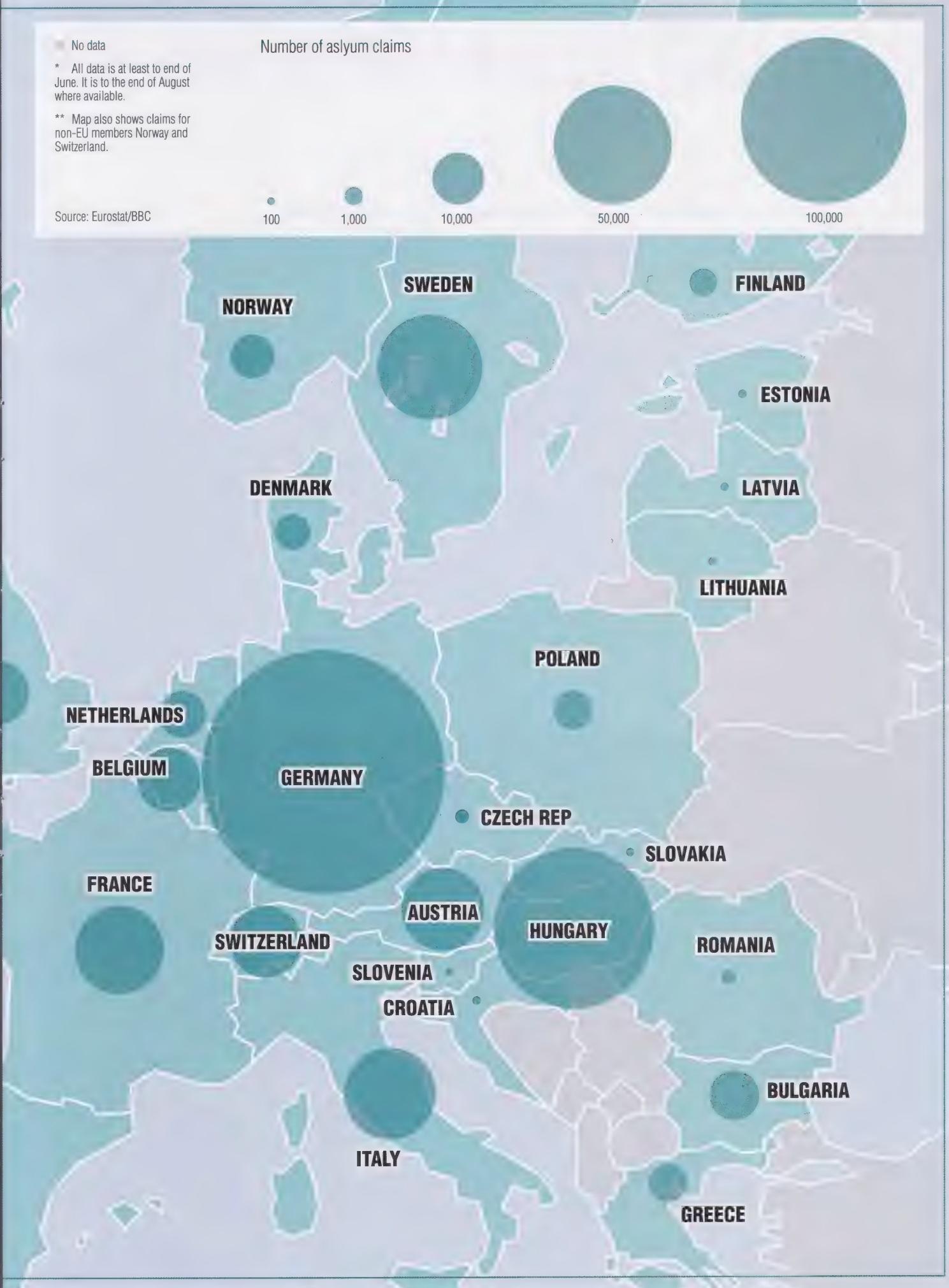
UK: The government announces that the UK will take just 20,000 Syrian refugees over the next five years as David Cameron talks about "swamping" and Home Secretary Theresa May makes one of the most hardline and strident anti-immigrant speeches in years.

Asylum claims in Europe 2015*

Total EU claims

530,265





Turning the blame on the

Joe Mulhall on how Counter-Jihadist right-wingers are using the refugee crisis to target Muslims

In Poland, the Żyleta Stand of the Polish Army Stadium, home of the Legia Warsaw football team, echoed to chants of "All of Legia shouts out loud, No to this Islamic horde!"

What marked out this display as not just anti-immigrant or anti-Muslim sentiment but rather as an articulation of Counter-Jihadist ideology was a large banner proclaiming "Stop Hijra"

The *hijra* (or *hijrah*) was the migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE. Some within the Counter-Jihad movement, most notably

Robert Spencer of Jihad Watch, view the current migrant crisis as a modern *hijra*.

Spencer has written: "To emigrate in the cause of Allah – that is, to move to a new land in order to bring Islam there, is considered in Islam to be a highly meritorious act. [...] And now a hijrah (*sic*) of a much greater magnitude is upon us."

By portraying the current influx of refugees as a new *hijra*, Spencer and his allies are redefining the current situation not as a humanitarian crisis but as a planned invasion.

This notion has not simply

been plucked out of the ether but is built on an Islamic State document titled *Libya: The Strategic Gateway for the Islamic State* that encourages Muslims to migrate to Europe as refugees.

For Counter-Jihad activists, this declaration of intent by the most extreme of the Islamist groups has been accepted as irrefutably explaining current events. All other possible explanations for the mass arrival of refugees are jettisoned in favour of the single possibility that fits completely with their existing beliefs.

As Geert Wilders, "the de

facto global leader of the Counterjihad (*sic*) Movement" stated in the Dutch parliament in September 2015: "ISIS is smuggling thousands of terrorists into Europe" and "99% of the refugees coming here, to start with, are not refugees at all, and all are Muslims."

It is this belief, pervasive in Counter-Jihad circles, that leads them to place the word migrant within quotation marks.

As is so often the case with conspiratorial minds, complex and nuanced events are reduced to comfortable single cause explanations



Banners displayed at the Legia Warsaw football ground (from left to right):
3 million Poles are dirt poor
200,000 Polish children malnourished
Over 50,000 Poles homeless
Where is the help for them?
The "Zyleta" stand is always with you
Stop Hijra!

Muslims

(left to right)
Counter-Jihadists
Andrew Bostom,
Geert Wilders,
Robert Spencer and
Pamela Geller



with all evidence that reaffirms their existing view being adopted and any contrary evidence being discarded or ignored.

To understand the reaction of the movement to the refugee crisis one has to grasp the Counter-Jihadists' current thinking.

In this case, the arrival of large numbers of – mainly – Muslim migrants fits perfectly into their belief that Europe is being invaded. As such the crisis is not viewed as a new phenomenon but rather as indivisible from the long term “flood” of Muslims into Europe; what

Fjordman, a leading Counter-Jihad blogger, has termed “Migration as Conquest” and *The Observer*, a Norwegian contributor to the Gates of Vienna blog, has called the, “demographic bomb strategy” and Pam Geller, “Immigration jihad”.

By understanding the present crisis as part of a supposed Islamist plot to conquer Europe, the very victims of ISIS barbarism, those forced to flee their homes, are recast as perpetrators and collaborators.

While it is undeniable that ISIS recruits will be

among the migrants heading to Europe, Counter-Jihad activists blow up confirmed examples as proof of a wider Islamist invasion.

Paul Weston, leader of the British Counter-Jihad party, Liberty GB, has even predicted that a child born today, “will live through the biggest racial/cultural upheaval ever witnessed in the history of mankind” and that by middle age, “will have seen racial/religious civil war and terrible bloodshed.” In short, allowing refugees into Europe “is to sign the death sentence for Western Civilisation”.

This belief in the imminent collapse of “Western Civilisation”, deeply reminiscent of traditional far right philosophical pessimism, is central to the fear that drives the Counter-Jihad movement’s vehement opposition to refugees.

As *The Kafir*, the Indian correspondent of the Gates of Vienna blog, wrote in September: “Western Civilisation is about to be destroyed, and will be replaced by the worst kind of ideology masquerading as a religion.” For the writer, the influx of Muslim refugees is like “a predator killing a healthy animal, eating it up, and moving on to the next healthy animal.”

Parallel with long-term fears of a decline of civilisation are short-term fears founded on more visceral forms of racism. Again, born of existing prejudices, in this case the belief that Muslim men

are inclined to rape and paedophilia, emerge the constant warnings that the arrival of new migrants will lead to or already has led to an *epidemic* of rape.

Nash Montana, a Swiss Counter-Jihad activist believes that, as a result of letting in such high numbers of Muslim immigrants, Germany will become “the Hochburg (stronghold)... of rape.”

Using typical Counter-Jihadist language, she continues: “I notice the rape epidemic in Germany has already begun”, thereby claiming an “epidemic” as fact before an “epidemic” has occurred.

So fervent is Montana’s fixation that Muslim men are rapists, the very fact that they are arriving in Germany at all, makes an epidemic inevitable.

Montana is by no means alone in such beliefs that are echoed throughout the movement. The UK group Britain First has written of “A culture of rape and sexual abuse” in asylum centres across Europe.

Many highlight the danger to Western women with the website Breitbart running headlines like “Europe’s Rape Epidemic: Western Women Will Be Sacrificed at the Altar of Mass Migration.”

Similarly, an article on the Gatestone Institute’s website about the so-called “Rape Epidemic” claims that “the raping of German women by asylum seekers is becoming commonplace” while an article on the Gates of Vienna





blog by Max Denken rants about “wave upon wave of young, sex-depraved and white-women crazed Muslim barbarians.”

The characterisation of young male refugees and migrants as a danger to Europe’s women is a regular refrain with Geert Wilders labelling male refugees “testosterone bombs”.

As with many claims by the Counter-Jihad movement there is a grain of fact at its core. There *have been* reported incidents of rape and child molestation both within refugee centres and among the wider public that are deeply worrying.

However, to build support for their position, Counter-Jihad activists systematically exaggerate and deliberately distort the issues to spread fear.

Thomas de Maizière, the German Federal minister of the interior, has explained how: “There are an unbelievable number of rumours regarding this issue, which are being spread massively over social networks. [...] The federal authorities are investigating these resolutely and often the rumours are not true, [...] There are things worthy of criticism. But there is no reason for a general suspicion of refugees.”

For Counter-Jihad activists such statements are dismissed as symptomatic of a cover-up. While these same activists’ analysis of the current refugee crisis is defined by their own prejudices, it has also provided them with a new impetus and a new champion: none other than

Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orbán.

Orbán has stated: “Those arriving have been raised in another religion, and represent a radically different culture. Most of them are not Christians, but Muslims. [...] This is an important question, because Europe and European identity is rooted in Christianity. Is it not worrying in itself that European Christianity is now barely able to keep Europe Christian? There is no alternative, and we have no option but to defend our borders.”

Such comments along with his generally authoritarian positions and his building of a wall along the Hungarian-Serbian border have won him plaudits from the Counter-Jihadist scene.

Street groups like the EDL have lauded him while his name was chanted at a recent PEGIDA rally in Dresden, Germany.

The usual assortment of bloggers has also been quick to hail him as “one of the few European leaders who still has some common sense left.”

Weston has put down Orbán’s muscular anti-migrant position to growing up in the Communist Eastern Bloc meaning he has

not been “swayed by sixty years of politically correct, subversive indoctrination meted out to non-Communist countries with regards to feminism, racism, multiculturalism and moral and cultural relativism.”

The sentiments of Orbán were echoed by Hungarian Roman Catholic Bishop, László Kiss-Rigó, when he rejected the humanitarian Papal position on refugees and instead declared: “They’re not refugees. This is an invasion.” Unsurprisingly, such comments were warmly welcomed on the Gates of Vienna blog.

The refugee crisis has without doubt invigorated the Counter-Jihad movement. While it has likely swelled its ranks, aided by the anti-refugee and anti-Muslim sentiments expressed in much of the mainstream press, it has also served as a confirmation for existing activists, solidifying their conspiratorial mindset.

Having long believed there is a “Muslim invasion” underway in Europe, the arrival of high numbers of Muslim refugees is now seen as proof of their assertions and no amount of evidence-based reasoning will dissuade them.



Hungarian Roman Catholic Bishop, László Kiss-Rigó,

Portsmouth council asylum decision slammed

Nick Spooner reports from the city

PORPSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL has written to Home Secretary Theresa May asking for the city to be withdrawn from the Government's asylum dispersal status. The decision, backed by 21 councillors to 16, comes in the midst of the worst humanitarian disaster for a generation.

"Asylum dispersal areas" emerged following the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and were created to assist local authorities financially, and remove some of the responsibility placed upon London and the South East, usually the points of entry, when it came to looking after refugees and asylum seekers.

Under the system, an asylum seeker will be sent to one of six regional relocation places across the UK. Here, under the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), an asylum seeker will receive just slightly over £5 a day and will often be housed in the cheapest accommodation available to local authorities; provided through the Home Office and often through private housing suppliers.

This initial accommodation becomes home for an asylum seeker while their claim is being processed. If and when a claim is approved, the claimant will have 28 days to get themselves off the asylum support system, find their own accommodation, get a job, find benefits if necessary and just generally enter "the system". It is easy to see how an asylum seeker might win their case and yet still remain destitute.

Seventeen of the Portsmouth's 19 Conservative councillors, 3 out of the 4 UKIP councillors (interestingly, one abstained) and one independent all voted in favour, stating that Portsmouth had taken more than its share of asylum seekers compared with other cities on the south coast.

Whilst being a morally inappropriate line of argument, it is, nevertheless, true to say that Portsmouth has welcomed more asylum seekers than places like Winchester, Bournemouth, Chichester and Guildford. Between April and June 2015, Portsmouth had just 124 asylum seekers in dispersal accommodation.

This is far more than the other aforementioned towns and cities in the south but absolutely pales in comparison with the contributions made by places like Liverpool (1,369) and Rochdale (956).

An additional strand of argument from the council was centred on the impact on public services caused by refugees, in particular, the number of Portsmouth school places taken by unaccompanied refugee children.

This situation has led to an angry outpouring of anti-refugee sentiment on social media. However, one of the city's councillors has informed us about just how false this argument is. There are currently just 5 unaccompanied refugees under the age of 16 in Portsmouth but none actually attends schools in the city itself.

The Bishop of Portsmouth has made a number of impassioned statements about the council's decision and is one of 84 Church of England bishops adding their names to a letter calling on David Cameron to accept 30,000 more refugees.

Indeed, Portsmouth Cathedral has moved to distance itself entirely from the city council, saying that "[it] is embarrassed and appalled by this crass decision", sentiments echoed, in one way or another, by other faith leaders and refugee services.

There is no question that other towns and cities on the south coast must do their share in these difficult times. However, voting to remove a lifeline to desperate human beings fleeing war and persecution at this moment is entirely the wrong move and can only send out the wrong message.

By stirring up xenophobic fears and utilising standard "resource seizing" misinformation, Portsmouth council is portraying its own city as unwelcoming and unprincipled at a time when the city needs to be doing exactly the opposite.

Portsmouth council would do better to work multilaterally with councils across the south coast to help make this beautiful area of the country home to those who have lost their own.

HOPE not hate is now linking up with other local organisations to oppose the council's decision.



Portsmouth harbour
Photo: Ronald Saunders

Britain's missing voters

HOPE not hate steps up registration campaign *Joelle Cheese* reports

IT IS THE EARLY 1900s and thousands of women are getting ready to wreak havoc on the streets of London for the right to vote. They blow up post boxes, set fire to (empty) properties and are arrested and force-fed in prison.

One woman, Emily Davison, even dies at the feet of the King's horse in the 1913 Derby and many die prematurely as a result of the damage inflicted on them in prison.

Fast-forward to 1965 and 25,000 people are marching from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, also for the right to vote. They march about 12 miles a day, sleeping in roadside fields at night. This follows an extensive campaign during which they have been beaten and gassed by police and racist thugs aligned to the infamous Ku Klux Klan.

And, today, the fight for universal suffrage continues.

At the beginning of this parliamentary term, the British government ignored the advice of the Electoral Commission, its own independent body, and voted for almost two million people to be removed from the electoral register – a year earlier than initially planned – on 1 December 2015.

As a result of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act, the UK is moving inexorably to a new method of electoral registration. Under the new system, each person must register individually providing proof of identity, preferably a national insurance number. This is called Individual Electoral Registration (IER).

Over the past year, local

councils have been working hard to identify people on the register to confirm their details. This time, called the "transition period", was due to end in December 2016 at which point all unconfirmed voters would be removed from the electoral registers.

The Electoral Commission is an organisation dedicated to managing elections and ensuring they are as fair as possible. It advised the government on the creation of the new system.

However, when the government proposed making the end of the transition period a year earlier than initially planned, the Electoral Commission advised them against doing so.

The Electoral Commission said: "Taking into account the data and evidence which is available to us at this point and the significant polls which are scheduled for May 2016, we recommend that Ministers should not make an order to bring forward the end of the transition to IER".

The government ignored this advice. One could only assume that this was done to allow the new register to be used for the Boundary Commission's Review of parliamentary constituencies, which begins next April.

With the bulk of those dropping off the register to be found in poorer, non-white communities, the new boundaries will give a big advantage to the Conservative Party, as its own heartlands have more stable populations.

HOPE not hate lobbied the House of Lords to block the decision, distributing a report to hundreds of peers and following this up

with a second briefing to crossbenchers.

While our report was warmly received, it appeared that the Lords' defeat of the government over Tax Credits, which happened the day before the IER vote, scared off many peers from inflicting a second defeat. The Lords voted to support the government by a margin of only 11.

The new system was created ostensibly to avoid the small number of cases of electoral registration fraud that occur each election. Such a massive shake up seems rather a drastic reaction to a small number of people abusing the system.

The transition to the new system is being rushed, implemented too early, disenfranchising millions of people just ahead of major regional elections in London, Wales and Scotland, the regions incidentally with the highest projected drop-offs.

The average percentage of people being removed from the register nationwide is 4% but, according to May 2015 figures, some local authorities will be affected more than others.

Hackney could lose 23% of voters, Cambridge 17% and Glasgow 13%. When one looks at regional values, the disparity is even starker. London could lose 6.92% of voters, Scotland 5.48%.

Most likely to be removed from the register are those least likely to know their national insurance number, to stay in one place for long or to understand English. In short, young people, private tenants and immigrants.

The data also show a

disparity between more settled, owner-occupying, affluent areas and more urban, poorer communities.

Table 1 on the right illustrates how the drop off will affect poorer communities.

The recently depleted register will be used to inform a review of constituency boundaries. Areas with the largest number of unregistered voters risk losing their MP and will be underrepresented in parliament for at least ten years (boundary reviews are generally scheduled every two parliamentary terms).

When we include the fact that 7.5 million eligible voters are estimated to be missing from the register already, the scale of the disenfranchisement in this country becomes truly staggering.

Our fight for universal suffrage in 2015 looks very different, but it is founded on the same values as those of the Pankhurst sisters and Martin Luther King Junior. Every individual, no matter their race, gender or class should the right to vote in their country of residence. Every individual should have the right to fair and equal representation.

These values were considered so important that they were cemented in the UN Convention for Human Rights. They are historically so significant that people have died fighting for them.

For HOPE not hate, voter registration and engagement is intrinsic to its work. When people do not have an outlet to express their frustrations they look to extremists



REGISTERING THE YOUNG

THE ELECTORAL Commission has estimated that 30% of 18-24 year olds were not on the register at the time of May's General Election, over twice the level of under-representation than the population as a whole.

Now, with the new changes to the way we register to vote, this figure is set to rise substantially.

There has been a 47% decline in 17-year-olds on the register compared with 2014.

Given that only 51% of 17-year-olds were on the register in 2014, this means that now only a quarter of this age group – people who will be allowed to vote when they turn 18 – will be registered.

We can also expect a massive reduction in University students on the 1 December register.

With Universities no longer able to mass-register students and many not running any voter registration promotion at all, hundreds of thousands are likely to remain unregistered.

Conservative estimates put first year student registration at just 30% with the figure falling to an appalling 10-15% in some areas.

Overall, HOPE not hate estimates that over 3m 16-24 year olds will not be on the register when the new register is released on 1 December.

Table 1. How the drop off will affect poorer communities

Richest Areas Outside London	% retained	Number retained
1 St Albans	1.67	1,823
2 Hart	3.51	2,497
3 Brentwood	1.98	1,171
4 Windsor and Maidenhead	8.88	9,398
5 Elmbridge	3.48	3,496
6 Waverley	2.26	2,116
7 Spelthorne	2.39	1,787
8 Wokingham	1.27	1,557
9 Surrey Heath	1.39	917
10 South Bucks	2.79	1,507

Britains poorest areas	% retained	Number retained
1 Liverpool	4.17	13,443
2 Middlesbrough	3.42	3,344
3 Manchester	6.55	23,846
4 Knowsley	1.69	1,911
5 Kingston upon Hull	2.88	5,329
6 Hackney	22.86	43,774
7 Tower Hamlets	8.19	15,215
8 Birmingham	7.67	56,645
9 Blackpool	4.1	4,290
10 Hartlepool	0.79	558

for solutions. Just as importantly, many of those who are likely to drop off are drawn from groups who will be more favourable to HOPE not hate's political outlook – for a multiracial, tolerant and inclusive society – so we need to ensure that their views count.

The Lords defeat was a major setback to our campaign but the fight goes on.

HOPE not hate has called for days of action across the country, staging leafleting events in Hackney, Birmingham, Cambridge and other areas with the largest voter drop offs, and organising the leafleting of train and tube stations across the capital.

London has become our main focus as not only are many of the areas facing the highest drop off in the

capital but the Electoral Commission has confirmed that 21% of Londoners eligible to have a vote are not currently on the register.

This equates to 1.5 million people. When the forthcoming drop-off is included, we could be looking at 27% of Londoners – 1.9m people – without a vote. The only thing more outrageous than this is the patent lack of anger and action it has generated amongst the media and political parties.

HOPE not hate has raised £10,000 to buy online adverts encouraging young people to vote. It is from amongst this age group that the biggest drop-offs are occurring.

Voting is the lifeblood of any functioning democracy. It is up to us to keep this blood flowing, to take back our say in how our country is run. ●



Matthew Collins investigates the “Infidels”, an EDL splinter group that is increasingly taking centre stage on Britain’s far right.

Long before the English Defence League (EDL) and its leader Tommy Robinson became household names, the organisation suffered a series of small and seemingly inconsequential splits.

Out of one of these ructions emerged a heavy mob, without formal membership, known as “The Infidels”, adopting a name that many EDL activists were already using to label themselves.

The “Infidels” were to distinguish themselves by performing a series of drunken and violent stunts. Not that the EDL was ever very restrained when it came to exhibiting racist or obnoxious behaviour, but it rapidly became apparent that the Infidel gang, or “culture” that fell out of the EDL had morphed into a caricature of some of the most violent and anti-social elements of the British far right in the 1990s.

Indeed, by the end of 2011, as well as linking up with elements of the British Ulster Loyalist scene, the “Infidels” were posting childish but chilling death threats on social media and engaging in the same kind of intimidation of the left that had earlier distinguished groups like the British National Party (BNP), National Front (NF) and Combat 18 as ideologically opposed to liberal and democratic values, again, if only on paper, a further disengagement from the EDL.

After the EDL was formed in 2009, its following was always unstable as people came and went, falling out with each other, fighting football hooligan wars

with each other and even meeting for pre-arranged punch-ups.

When Robinson (real name Stephen Yaxley-Lennon) quit the EDL in a blaze of publicity in 2013, he made national and international headlines. His personal brand was already failing and in freefall and yet, the EDL had only really recently prior to his departure, become a national cause for concern.

On leaving, Lennon spoke of having become tired of being a front man for “nazi scum”. He knew that he could no longer hide from the fact that the EDL had been infested with disenchanted BNP members and small pockets of even harder-line nazis from almost the start.

With every one of what was to become, for Lennon, a series of stints in prison, the views of the nazi hardliners permeated the group. Although the EDL’s mantra had been “Not racist, not violent” the group consolidated and also became maniacally territorial during his spells in custody. In effect, during Lennon’s absences, the group self-radicalised further to the extreme of the ultra-right than was good for business.

Money, power and personality always drove the EDL and in 2010, rising star John “Snowy” Shaw, an avid crack cocaine fan and later-to-be convicted animal abuser, split away from the organisation, taking a group no larger than thirty people with him and marking a move towards formalising the “Infidels”.

For a group, on social media at least, numbering tens of thousands of supporters, the departure of the strange



North West Infidels Timeline

2011



OCTOBER – NWI demonstration in Leeds. 50 attendees from various EDL splinter groups, including the Combined ex-Forces and Scottish Defence League

2012

FEBRUARY – 100-strong anti-grooming demonstration in Rochdale in conjunction with National Front (NF) members. Attempts are made to storm the Town Hall. John “Snowy” Shaw vows his gang will be back every week

FEBRUARY – Heywood Infidels believed to be involved in overnight violence in Hyde, Greater Manchester, following allegations about sexual violence

FEBRUARY – Liverpool: Infidels join up with Ulster Loyalists to attack the annual James Larkin parade

MARCH – Heywood: Another joint protest with the NF. Infidels supporters end up on the roof of Bury Town Hall afterwards

NOVEMBER – Paul Prodromou forms South East Alliance (SEA), aligning it with NWI

NOVEMBER – Infidels provide security for BNP protest and meeting in Blackpool

DECEMBER – Infidels protest outside anti-fascist conference in Liverpool

Shaw and his pals should not have mattered much. But as the EDL and Robinson appeared to lurch from one disaster to another, those who became disaffected or disenfranchised by the EDL did one of two things: They gave up or headed further right.

By 2011, thus, two distinctly different groups operating in the EDL orbit had taken shape: Lennon's increasingly unconvincing “not racist, not violent” EDL and the soon-to-be “Infidels”. They were also mutually hostile.

EDL and Infidels clash at a rally in Blackburn in April 2011



In April 2011, a mass brawl lasting ten minutes erupted at a 2,000 strong EDL demonstration in Blackburn, not between the EDL and anti-fascist protestors but between rival groups of EDL supporters. One of the gangs was later to become part of the “Infidels”, a group that had already spread from Yorkshire to Newcastle and Sunderland and was now embedding itself in Lancashire.

Backing up the Lancashire “dissenters” were hardened football hooligans drawn from the north east who had evidently

arrived by coach with the sole intention of attacking Lennon and his cousin and EDL co-founder, Kevin Carroll.

They were, apparently, reacting to criticism of their behaviour by Lennon and Carroll. In a conversation with HOPE not hate at the time, an exasperated Carroll claimed that “neo-nazis” were trying to kill him and Lennon and take over the EDL.

Lennon would later be arrested and charged with assault for his part in the brawl and claimed again that he had been fighting against a nazi faction within the EDL.

And, to strengthen Lennon’s claims, Shaw was soon after to declare that, having read both the Book of Revelations and the notorious antisemitic forgery *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, it was also the Jews, as well as Muslims, destroying the country.

Among those keenly taking up the baton of violence and intimidation was a small-time criminal from Blackburn, Shane Calvert, who was quickly gaining notoriety under the moniker “Diddyman”, a self-deprecating reference to his diminutive size.

Despite being considerably smaller than the EDL, the “Infidels” revelled in the excitement of both hardline nazism

2013

MAY – Infidels and NF members involved in violence before, during and after a march to “honour” Lee Rigby

JUNE – 80 fascists descend on Ashton under Lyne for “Rivers of Blood”- themed demonstration. Nick Griffin sends bodyguard Martin Reynolds to meet with Shane Calvert

JUNE – Under the banner “North West Frontline Firm”, a ragbag of fascists from NWI, Casuals United, EDL and the British National Party (BNP) stage a 100-strong march in Burnley and attack journalists

JULY – Another Infidels demonstration in Ashton under Lyne. Calvert later meets Griffin again

SEPTEMBER – NWI and SDL members steward stormy BNP meeting in Blackpool

SEPTEMBER – Seven members of Infidels gang sentenced for an assault on anti-fascists in Liverpool

2014

JANUARY – Around 100 NF supporters and Infidels join a march, in memory of Lee Rigby, through Manchester, led by a pipe band. Infidels and NF break away to attack photographers

FEBRUARY – An NF/Infidels activist is arrested as part of a major drugs raid in Liverpool

MAY – Infidels and NF members campaign with Nick Griffin in Bolton against the building of a new mosque

MAY – Infidels attempt to intimidate protesters outside Nick Griffin’s Euro-election count in Manchester.

AUGUST – 100 Infidels and NF supporters protest in Bolton at building of a mosque. A large counter-demonstration leads to minor clashes

NOVEMBER – Infidels join the NF (northern faction) on the annual Remembrance Sunday parade to the Cenotaph in London

2015

MARCH – Violence breaks out at the NF’s “White Pride” event in Manchester. Infidels send speakers and engage in running battles with anti-fascists in pubs around the city centre

APRIL – 50 NWI and NF members hold provocative flash demonstration in Blackburn

JUNE – Danny Holding from Wigan jailed for 8 months after leading a supposed NWI “sting” against paedophiles that was little more than an exercise in mugging and blackmail

AUGUST – Calvert and others look on as National Action (NA) is routed at Liverpool Lime Street station in the biggest humiliation of the far right in Britain for nearly twenty years

AUGUST – Infidels join the NF to hold another “White Pride” demonstration in Manchester, congratulating each other on not capitulating to opposition like NA did a week before in Liverpool

AUGUST – Infidels and NF march together in Wigan. Campaign of violence and intimidation against trades unionists gets underway in the town

OCTOBER – Calvert claims up to 400 people will join his gang for a groundbreaking march against immigration through Preston but fewer than 60 show up. Calvert meets up with the “leadership” of the far right holding a John Tyndall memorial meeting in the town on the same day

and the hedonism of drug-fuelled anti-social behaviour.

One former EDL organiser who spoke to us at the time told of endless supplies of legal highs and fake designer gear purchased in Manchester and hawked around pubs in Blackburn, Leeds, Sunderland and their surrounding areas to finance the gang’s activities.

Within the EDL there had clearly developed a fat underbelly of individuals tied to the welfare state who spent their lives on social media, drinking and fornicating among themselves with no hope or interest in ever finding work. Whilst their habits and behaviour drove many away from the EDL, the “Infidels” nurtured many of these characters with a steady diet of vile racism, criminality and violence.

In October 2011, in Newcastle town centre, representatives from almost the entire British far right fought a running battle over their differences.

Horrified shoppers fled in terror as the “Infidels”, the EDL,

the Scottish Defence League (SDL) and National Front (NF) fought a pitched battle. The fight was quickly brought to an end when one of the Scottish fascists produced a hatchet in the melee.

One of those taking a great interest in the development of the “Infidels” was, of course, the then BNP leader, Nick Griffin. As the BNP had declined and split and the EDL had at the time risen, Griffin encouraged the “Infidels” by inviting them along to BNP

rallies in the north west, where he was a sitting MEP.

In February 2012, both the EDL and the BNP demonstrated in the same place but at different times in the same town, Hyde in Greater Manchester. At the last minute, the vastly outnumbered BNP leader amusingly offered an olive branch to the EDL, to come and join the BNP’s anti-grooming demonstration. The EDL leader, Stephen Lennon, responded by telling Griffin to “piss off.”

This sealed the relationship between the BNP and the North West “Infidels” almost immediately, the “Infidels” later that night even hanging one of their flags at a BNP social in Blackpool whilst Griffin addressed the mob.

In May 2012, Calvert was arrested for an attack on the home of his pregnant ex-partner in Hartlepool, a fact that went almost without criticism by his colleagues. Neither did anyone have anything to say when Calvert’s erstwhile mentor, Shaw, was convicted of animal cruelty, starving to death a number of animals he kept on his property while all the time enjoying the high life in the far right fast lane.



(left) Shane Calvert and John “Snowy” Shaw

THE DIRTY DOZEN

SHAUN "Fat Mess" JONES (Eccles) National Front activist and former organiser, was recently held in a police swoop for non-political activities which led to the NF's leadership temporarily dumping him. A nuisance around the North West and Liverpool in particular where had criminal friends.

DANIEL LEWIS (Wigan)
Doubles at the local NF organiser. Fanatical thug who runs campaigns of hate against women and gays.

PETER WHARTON (Blackpool)
Wants to be known as some kind of C18 "soldier". Has turned his home in Blackpool into a kind of drop-in centre for nazis and racists.

PETER HAWLEY (Blackburn)
One of the original Blackburn EDL. Seen as Calvert's closest confidant, Hawley went to prison as part of the "Liverpool 6" who assaulted a man and his two children in 2013.

DEBORAH JEMSON (Blackburn)
Ex-English Defence League, moving into the NWI/National Front when the rest of Blackburn quit the EDL. Close to Calvert's mother. Regularly recites the Bible at demonstrations.

JUDITH CALVERT (Blackburn)
Runs what appears to be some kind of "WAGS" group to support her son and his friends' during their constant spells in prison.

GERALD MCCULLION (Blackpool)
Violent thug not long out of prison for head-butting his uncle and biting his cousin's ear off at a family function last year. Also active in the NF.

DANNY HOLDING (Wigan)
Released from prison last month after being sentenced for a vicious assault.

JOHN ENGLISH (Blackburn)
Blackburn based relative new comer to the group. Speaks on behalf of the NWI at rallies.

KEVIN WATMOUGH (Bradford)
Although Bradford-based, the Redwatch webmaster has taken NWI under his experienced wing. Watmough shares many recreational interests with the North West Infidels, namely plotting the return of "Combat 18" of whom Watmough has a ready-made supply of banners, stickers and badges available for sale.

CONRAD AYSCOUGH (Blackburn)
Ex-EDL. Notorious thug, football hooligan and jailbird who moved from Yorkshire to Blackburn to be with Calvert's mother. (well worth a google just to see his record!)

Although the “Infidels” moved only a relatively small chunk of what had been EDL members firmly onto the furthest right of the political spectrum in this country, as a force to be reckoned with they remained a constant and unstable source of extremism, a sponge for people orphaned by either the EDL’s constant purges or for those who wanted to ditch the moribund and static EDL and far right for a more dynamic (and violent) *modus operandi*.

Though the group staged attempts at its own demonstrations – often using cover names like “North West Frontline Firm” – in attempts to broaden its appeal in its early stages, it remains, certainly outside of the north east, a rather fluid, ill-disciplined and unpredictable vehicle for Calvert and Shaw’s criminality.

As their initial attitudes towards race and identity have broadened post-EDL, the “Infidels” have assumed a more brutal and intimidatory role in attacks on the left.

In September 2013, Calvert was sentenced to fourteen months for leading a gang attack on a father walking through Liverpool with his two sons. The sentencing of Calvert and six other men, ranging in ages between seventeen and fifty-three years, bought to an end a reign of terror, harassment and intimidation that the “Infidels” had waged against trade unionists and anti-fascists in the city for almost a year and left a small void in and around the region that proved, in reality, only to be a short breathing space in Liverpool before the National Action (NA) youth gang sprang into dramatic (if slightly less violent) action.

In December 2013, Shaw tried to rein in the North East “Infidels” under his control to wage his personal war on the EDL and, potentially, to finish it off once and for all. But the appetite for internecine conflict in the North East had diminished and, still to this day, the five active far right groups in the North East operate without, it appears, any great antagonism towards each other of the kind that the “Infidels” have fomented elsewhere.

In April 2014, Calvert was released on bail but, after a resumption of his previous activities, he was returned to prison until December 2014. After his release from prison, the “Infidels” became an extension of the NF, though there appears to be little difference between the two groups.

Before being sentenced, Calvert had established a firm link with the NF and its rather broad church of displaced nazis that operates in and around the North West. Calvert and Shaw were both drawn to those behind the infamous Redwatch website which has acted both



Wayne Baldwin leads a retreat by Blood & Honour during the Liverpool debacle

as an inspiration and also a link into the traditional far right.

Shaw and Calvert did not come into the “movement” via the traditional path of the NF, British Movement or the BNP. Both have tried, therefore, to rekindle or simulate an historical if not cultural, association of the “Infidels” with the previous imagery and intimidation embodied by both the mainland UDA and Combat 18 gangs of the 1990’s.

As 2015, draws to a close, the “Infidels” have come to represent what the British far right really is: group of parasites gnawing at and feeding off the putrid carcasses of the BNP and EDL.

Despite its great protestations and threatening posturing – particularly in the cases of groups like NA or Britain First – there is very little coherent political ideology and substance present within the British far right. In that respect, it is an empty box.

Though there is energy and enthusiasm, there is no real leadership with the culture or intelligence to build a thriving or prosperous movement, electorally or otherwise.

The media in particular remains desperate to portray what it does not understand about an increasingly visible but dishevelled far right as being somehow being on the move. It is not even in transition. An empty box stuck on the political hard shoulder of the far right.

The decline of the BNP and the EDL, the two groups that led the way to the strongest British far right for more than thirty years shows that Britain still has no real appetite or desire to embrace fascism and its constant foible of courting self-destruction.

The media’s preoccupation with the far right is based on its online activity, not its electoral weakness or its relatively minor size. As a result, it misses completely the emerging picture of a fractured, fragmented and dangerous far right.

Griffin predicted upon the BNP’s deathbed that groups like the “Infidels” and NA were the necessary ingredients to see fascism in Britain survive. But, as we spelled out last year, the National Front were the great movers and shakers this

year, interchanging and intertwining, as they went, both personnel and space with the “Infidels” and NA.

This year saw the NA threat almost extinguished on the forecourt of Liverpool’s Lime Street station, while the “Infidels”, installed in nearby pubs, could barely be bothered to look up from their beer.

Britain First has become a parody of itself as well as the EDL and has almost been completely consumed by its lack of substance and transparency, a failure to deliver what it so dangerously prophesised.

And while there are those who are still dreaming and cooking up new organisations, with new intrigue and excitement, even they do not quite see how a way to get off this tawdry and incessant treadmill of failure and political incest is possible.

In a rare outing under their own name in Preston in early October, the “Infidels”, now one of the most long standing of all the assembled parasites on the far right believed for a brief moment that their drug dealing, violence and crude racism had paid them a dividend.

Calvert bragged that up to some 400 would attend his demonstration and that a “sea change” had now moved the majority of the “patriotic” movement into his orbit, where street violence and confrontation as well as the parasitical relationship between a number of other tiny fascist gangs, would to move the “Infidels” (and not the NF) to top of the league in British far right politics. Fewer than sixty attended.

In many ways though, he may have a point. The far right is more active and more violent than it has been for a long time and this *does* make it more dangerous with the unregulated, unchecked and unrivalled activities of the “Infidels” probably making them the most “problematic” group on the extreme right fringe.

And as the actions of NA race fanatic Zack Davies proved – but not to a deaf press – this does not make the far right in this country new, different or growing.

It does not have to be any of those things to be dangerous.



Preparing to su

Last month, a small group of nazis got dolled up as soldiers for their latest self-styled "survivalist" training venture. Mostly drawn from the North West and Yorkshire, they trained, fought and posed for photos. **Matthew Collins** reports on the secretive Misanthropic Division.



Francesco Saverio Fontana, former member of the Azov Battalion

IT HAS NEITHER the panache nor the art school pretences to be cutting edge artistic like its National Action (NA) stable mates, but the "Misanthropic Division", a tiny gang of nazis drawn from the murkier fringes of the fragmented British far right, believes it is cutting edge enough to fight in a war.

As with NA, its heroes and inspiration are the hardline nazis of the Azov Battalion fighting in Ukraine on behalf of the Ukrainian government.

Fiercely racist, both NA and the Misanthropic Division (MD) steep themselves in the twisted imagery of Hitler's SS. Whereas NA has preferred this theatrical and dramatic approach to revealing how enamoured they are of both historical Nazism and popular counter-culture, there is actually a *real* Misanthropic Division fighting in the Ukraine, as part of the above-mentioned Azov Battalion.

August's Liverpool Lime Street disaster,

in which NA and its hard line supporters were humiliated – under a hail of fresh fruit – by anti-fascists has spurred what still remains a tiny group of people to prepare for a much upped *ante*.

Small numbers of fascist street fighters from groups like Infidels, the National Front (NF) and the fringes of the C18 network are enrolling for training weekends, similar to those run for NA, which include training with airsoft rifles and mixed martial arts.

Overseeing the UK Misanthropic Division is Francesco Saverio Fontana, a former member of the Azov Battalion and a one-time member of the Italian nazi group, CasaPound.

Fontana first surfaced in the UK in March when he attended NA's "White Man" demonstration in Newcastle. Fontana claimed to be part of a recruiting outfit, sent to recruit young British nazis to join with other young nazis from across Europe heading to the Ukraine.



rive

Fontana's own record in the Ukraine was hardly brilliant. A heavy smoker and drinker, the overweight Fontana was sent packing from the Ukraine before his visa even expired (rendering him a potential prisoner) and told to head to the UK where British nazis were already training in the disciplines that the Azov Battalion recommended.

By the time NA was humbled in Liverpool, Fontana had replaced former British National Party (BNP) organiser Chris Livingstone as leader of the Misanthropic Division UK, an indication that, perhaps, having apparently recruited nobody as yet to head to Ukraine, that there was too much of the traditional British pastime of playacting and flag-waving (NA's own favourite pastimes) and not a lot of serious intent in the group squatting on MD's name.

NA's capitulation in Liverpool, where its "soldiers" hid and looked like rabbits caught in headlights, has set it back immeasurably. The dressing up, the theatre and the pompous proclamations of small boys clad in oversized black garb were met with derision across Europe.

NA's leader, Ben Raymond, had spent a substantial amount of his time travelling

to Finland, Estonia and Latvia meeting up with tiny nazi militia groups in an attempt to impress upon them the serious nature of his own tiny group.

Thus, NA's disgrace was felt far further afield than the left luggage office of Liverpool's Lime Street station, and for now, they are back putting up stickers around universities and scrawling offensive graffiti; almost collapsing under the sheer weight of what they had started about could not finish.

A further appearance by Raymond, this time on the BBC's Victoria Derbyshire show in September, also left the group open to sniping, ridicule and antagonism, in particular from the NE, the Infidels and elements within CI8.

Fontana now appears to be the lead advocate of building a paramilitary movement among British fascists but his influence should not be overstated. In August, he led one group of British nazis into a bizarre and bitterly embarrassing confrontation with another group of British nazis holding a protest outside the Ukrainian embassy. The fall-out from this was severely to hamper moves to build a large, anti-Jewish protest in London though, of course, both sides did



JIMMY HEY

Owns/runs an MMA gym in Heywood, Greater Manchester. Desperate to avoid publicity about his NA and further far right links. Also started training people in use of airsoft guns at a variety of places around the north, including a disused power station, an amusement park and, most recently, a paintball centre between Leeds and Hull. Turned up in Liverpool to see how his charges were performing, telling his non-political friends he was on a day out in Blackpool. Watched the disaster unfold from behind dark glasses, next to Shane Calvert and other members of the Infidels, but did not intervene.



cooperate in the demonstrations.

The British far right is still dogged by longstanding and internecine hatreds harking back to the far-from halcyon days of the original British nazi terrorists of Combat 18. For the moment at least, Fontana can only assist and wait until such a time as the British recover from their own self-interested feuding.

It is the re-emergence of a militant anti-fascist movement and the persistence of C18 that is consuming and distracting members of the NF and The Infidels, themselves relatively new to this scene. NA's dismissive gatecrashing of this mix has only added to a confused and distorted picture of a toxic environment.

A violent and confrontational network in the North West, driven by drug interests and personal vendettas, already exists and it is within these gangs that Fontana has managed to persuade individuals normally occupied with heavy drinking to crawl into bed with his Misanthropic Division, even if he cannot develop an understanding of their international responsibilities.

In September, the group undertook a training camp in full paramilitary garb, complementing the ongoing training in Yorkshire with airsoft rifles, mountain climbing in Wales, mixed martial arts in Lancashire and the ongoing street war with militant anti-fascists.

Among those drawn to this camp were some of the more violent and volatile elements of the North West Infidels, including Liam Pinkham, who is also aligned to C18 and close to its leader Will Browning, Karl Turner (aka Carl Marsh) and Charlie Marston.

The apparatus and some of the individuals, as with NA, remain the same. Post- Liverpool however, the *ante* and urgency both seem to be a lot higher.

MISANTHROPIC DIVISION TIMELINE 2015

JANUARY

National Action (NA) winter camp. Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) instructor Jimmy Hey oversees training for thirty volunteers.



FEBRUARY



Pol
Pot

NA, Misanthropic Division and Polish nazis hold demonstration outside Ukraine Embassy in London.

Ben Raymond, NA leader, turns up at a nazi meeting in Finland and delivers speech. He later declares himself a supporter of the actions of Pol Pot, the Cambodian Stalinist dictator, who murdered millions of his own countrymen and women.

Joint outdoor MMA training at a disused power station near Accrington, Lancashire. NA turns it into a photoshoot, giving the location away.

Raymond and former BNP organiser, Paul Hickman, turn up in Latvia. Raymond tells the Latvians that NA is ready for a race war and has built an army of "brutes" that has cleared the left from the streets.

Raymond has himself photographed holding an assault rifle.

NA holds "White Man" protest in Newcastle. Livingstone leads small number of MD under banner to the protest.

NA makes theatrical entrance with Fontana in attendance.

Six people are later arrested and NA loses out in confrontation with anti-fascists. The National Front (NF) has to fight its way out of town.

NF holds "White Pride World Wide" protest a week later in Manchester with Polish nazis. NA warned to stay away.



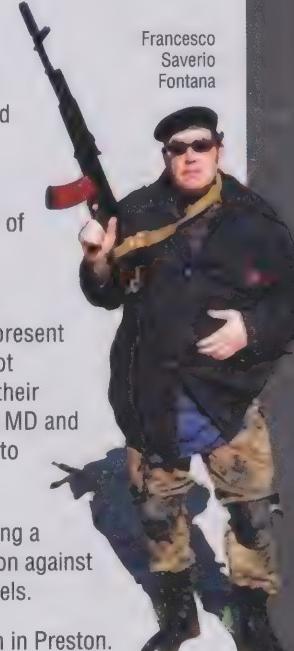
APRIL



"Free Gary Yarbrough" (US nazi terrorist) picket organised by Livingstone in London. NA and MD attend. National Action holds seminar in Leeds. Hey speaks but his identity is not revealed.

JUNE

David Lane (US nazi terrorist killer) memorial demonstration in London. First time the Infidels have made a big showing in this arena. Marsh and Calvert show up with C18 flag.



Joint demonstration and debacle in Rotherham. Livingstone claims he is standing down as leader of Misanthropic Division.



Chris
Living-
stone

Fontana watches NA crumple at Liverpool Lime Street station where neither he nor the Infidels present intervene to help. A small number of C18 attempt a rescue mission and are driven out covered in their own blood. Fontana confirms he is the leader of MD and has "sacked" Livingstone for being "too similar to the BNP."

SEPTEMBER

NF holds rowdy demonstration in Wigan, beginning a campaign of harassment, violence and intimidation against local trade unionists in cooperation with the Infidels.



Jimmy
Hey

Infidels hold disappointingly small demonstration in Preston.

On the same day there, Calvert meets Fontana and members of the London Forum at the John Tyndall Memorial Meeting being held at the same time.

What is left of NA joins with MD playing soldiers at a paintball centre in Yorkshire. NF and Infidels also in attendance.

Oldham Revisited

Nick Lowles on the forthcoming Oldham West and Royton by-election

IT WAS THE scene of the British National Party's big electoral breakthrough back in 2001, when party leader Nick Griffin came third with 16.4% and now Oldham West and Royton will be in the political spotlight again as voters choose a replacement for Michael Meacher, who died in October.

The parliamentary by-election, probably on 3 December, will be the first electoral test for Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party and an opportunity for political revival for UKIP.

There is a lot riding on the result for both parties.

The ballot will test whether Corbyn's Labour can retain the support of the northern white working class and not scare off more affluent Labour voters. For UKIP, which has had a difficult six months, it will be an opportunity to regain some momentum and challenge Labour for the white working class vote.

Oldham West and Royton is a seat Labour should safely hold. Michael Meacher held the seat with 54.8% of the vote, with UKIP a long way behind on 20.6%.

The constituency is a relatively poor area, with just 56% of adults in work and 32% living in some form of rented accommodation. The constituency shares many of the same characteristics as neighbouring Heywood & Middleton, where UKIP came within a whisker of winning in a by-election in 2014, except for one major difference: Oldham West & Royton has a 28% ethnic minority population, of which virtually all are



Muslim.

On paper it should be an easy Labour hold but by-elections can deliver massive surprises and there are factors in this seat that offer UKIP some hope.

UKIP is clearly the main challenger to Labour so it is likely to be able to win over some people who voted Conservative in May as an anti-Corbyn vote. It is also questionable whether the Conservatives will run much of a campaign as they may decide to give UKIP a free run at eating into Labour's white working class support.

Some commentators believe UKIP has peaked and point to its failure to win more MPs and the infighting and declining votes in council by-elections.

I've never bought into this view, especially since the election of Jeremy Corbyn, whose views on international issues, defence, the monarchy and immigration are unlikely to chime with UKIP voters or some disillusioned Labour voters.

And, it is also important to remember that this area was one of the BNP's main

strongholds in the early 2000s. In the 2001 General Election, BNP leader Nick Griffin grabbed his 16.4% vote in the Oldham West and Royton constituency, benefiting from the country's worst race riots for decades that had occurred just two weeks before polling day.

The BNP had a councillor in Royton South, one of the seven wards in the constituency, and regularly polled in excess of 30% in Hollinwood, Chadderton South and Chadderton Central.

The UKIP candidate is Paul Nuttall, the party's deputy leader, and the by-election will enable it to throw its national resources into the seat. Nigel Farage can be expected to be in the constituency on a regular basis.

Labour, in contrast, will be relying heavily on the Muslim vote, which should, in theory, be strong and loyal. However, the battle for selection of its candidate might open divisions within the local party. The constituency party is already under special measures and

The Lib Dems might decide to stand a Muslim candidate in the hope of improving on its derisory 3.7% of the vote. Every extra vote they get could be at Labour's expense.

The British National Party has indicated its intention to stand a candidate and the National Front claim to be giving it some consideration but both will be sideshows and their votes will be minimal.

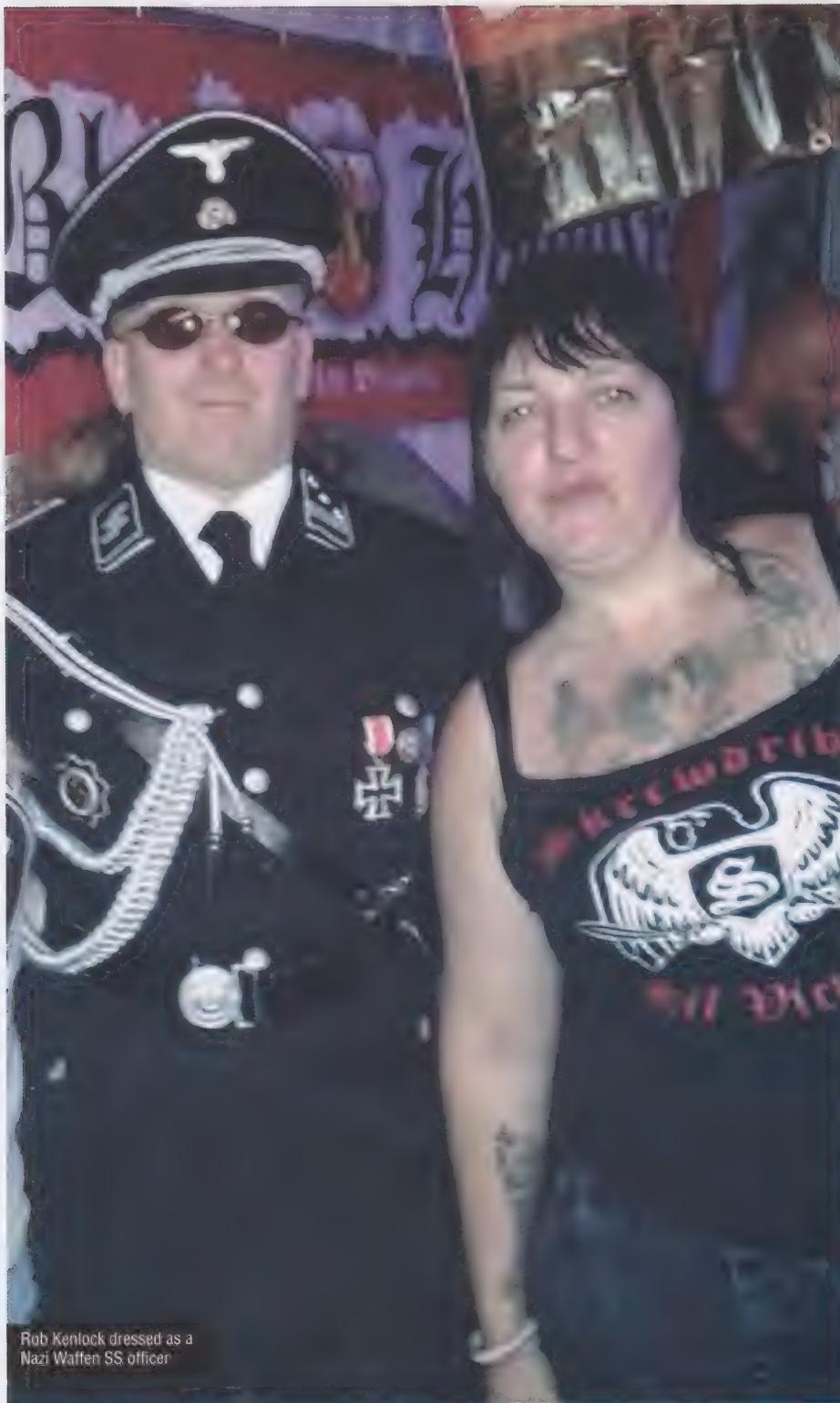
For our part, HOPE not hate will be running a targeted campaign, both turning out the anti-racist vote but also trying to win over soft UKIP supporters. We will not be advocating support for any particular political party but we will go after those who use immigration and race to stoke up tensions.

We will also be using this election to test out some new election campaigning techniques that we hope to roll out in other key areas across the country in May.

The Oldham West and Royton election will be an important measure of the political temperature and the result will undoubtedly help shape the political landscape and battlegrounds for the next six months.

While it should be a Labour hold, UKIP will be snapping at Labour's heels and a strong vote for Farage's party will ensure that it will be a major threat to Labour in next May's local elections.

German nazis turn on “SS officer”



Rob Kenlock dressed as a Nazi Waffen SS officer

Nick Lowles reports on this year's Ian Stuart Donaldson concert

ROB KENLOCK really thought he was being funny. Dressed as a Nazi Waffen SS officer, he pranced around the concert marquee throwing his right hand in the air to the delight of most of the onlookers.

Kenlock, who has a large wardrobe of Nazi uniforms and memorabilia, was dressed up for the occasion.

The annual Ian Stuart Donaldson gig is the largest white power Blood&Honour event of the year, held in late September, to mark the death of the movement's founder, icon and former Skrewdriver lead singer, Ian Stuart Donaldson.

It is a pure hate jamboree, where nazi saluting and idolising history's racists and fascists are the norm.

But not everyone was amused with Kenlock. Several German nazis took offence and ordered him to remove his outfit. "Our grandfathers fought hard to wear that uniform," one German angrily told Kenlock, "and you are taking the piss."

Fearing a beating, Kenlock made a hasty retreat to change. He later issued a grovelling apology on Facebook.

Kenlock had reason to be fearful of the Germans. Once upon a time the largely British crowd might have told their German brothers to chill out, but not now. Though the gig is the biggest in the Blood & Honour calendar, there were more Germans present than Brits.

In fact, the home contingent made up just a third of the 450 in attendance. Perhaps they were no more than a quarter.

It was easily the smallest B&H ISD gig for years, partly because there were fewer foreigners than would normally come, with many being fed up that the same old bands were playing as at every previous gig but also because of the



shrinking and wrinkling British white power scene.

The exception was the 2013 event, marking the 20th anniversary of Ian Stuart's death. Then, over 1,000 people packed into the marquee but even then many were disappointed because no "big" US band had been imported.

And this is central to the mounting resentment at the British white power followers. There is growing anger at what they perceive as a fundraising enterprise for one man: the gig's organiser, the aptly named Ginger Rob.

How can it be that French Blood&Honour, that holds much smaller events, can bring over Bound for Glory, but the British group can't, many were heard complaining.

Ginger Rob runs these events like a private company. He pockets the £25 ticket money, supplies the alcohol and takes the money from the stallholders.

He even rents out the PA system, equipment he originally bought with Blood&Honour money.

The alcohol, a mixture of beer, Fosters and cider had been bought from the local cash and carry. To circumvent licensing laws, it was then sold as part of raffle tickets at £10 each, which could then be cashed in for four cans. Not only was Rob making a decent profit on each can but also buying the four cans for the £10 raffle ticket was the only option. Tough luck if you only wanted one or two drinks. Or five for that matter.

The event is clearly now a family business, as Rob's son, Stevie, is in on the act too. He ran the Rampage Records stall, the only British stall selling Blood&Honour magazines and merchandise. In fact, the Rampage stall was the only

British stall there. The other was linked to Pitbull Farm, the Swedish band who headlined the gig. Bizarrely, the band still likes to pretend it is not a white power band.

As is now the norm for the ISD gig, the event started on the Friday with about 300 in attendance. It was a low-key event with Brad, from Blackout, Steve Cartwright from Nemesis and Rob's son, Stevie, all singing ballads.

Some people were camping in the field around the marquee site but about 100 were staying in a hotel some 40 minutes drive away.

This was another reason for irritation. As usual, Ginger Rob organised the accommodation at £65 a pop, but for security reasons did not give away the location until the Friday afternoon. In addition to the £65 hotel room, people were forced to pay £30 each way in the taxi.

The bands on the Saturday were the usual selection. Section 88, Blackout, Pitbull Farm, March or Die and Whitelaw.

Benny Bullman, lead singer of Whitelaw, led the minute's silence for Ian Stuart.

Notable by their absence were Ken McKellan's Brutal Attack and Legion of Saint George. While Legion's lead singer Simon Dutton was present, his guitarist Gary Smith, affectionately known to his Blood and Honour friends as "Fat Gary", was said to be in Japan buying Koi Carp.

Smith, whose involvement in fascist politics stretches back to his time in Combat 18 and as a BNP candidate, runs a very successful Koi Carp breeding business. So respected in the industry, in fact, that he was recently the President of the Koi Carp Retailers Association.

Quite what those in the trade, especially in Japan where he travels regularly to buy his fish, will think of his fascist politics remains to be seen. As it was, Smith was down with an Achilles problem and did not manage to get to Japan.

Probably the most interesting fact of the weekend was the venue, a large field in rural Cambridgeshire. It appears that the land was purchased by veteran Nazi Steve "Swinny" Swinfen, supposedly with some money provided by Blood&Honour, with the intention of having it as a regular venue for ISD gigs in the future.

A tarmac road had been laid into the field and there is talk of building a "clubhouse" for future use. Not that Swinny and Ginger Rob will get planning permission, especially after HOPE not hate informs the relevant authorities about the land's planned use.

It is fairly sure the field's neighbour, who runs a tyre repair business, might also want to object. He was furious that his dog was in a highly disturbed state the entire weekend.

Swinny has spent most of the last few years living in Hungary, where he is involved in the illegal Blood & Honour structure.

Given the falling attendance, the aging attendees and the remoteness of the venue – to say nothing of the letter we are writing to the local council – it seems incredible to think the purchase of the field is anything more than a speculative investment.

Perhaps, like the tattoo shop that was bought a few years ago in Berkshire with Blood&Honour's ill-gotten gains, it is doomed.

Journeys through English Defence League activism

Joel Busher

IT CAN BE all too easy to dismiss activists in groups such as the EDL as mindless hooligans and racists – we've all seen the videos of EDL activists kicking through barricades, throwing beer cans and punches at their opponents, journalists and bystanders, chanting racist slogans, and of course the notorious 'Muslamic ray guns' incident. Yet we do ourselves few favours by dealing in caricatures; on the contrary, we undermine our capacity to understand how they mobilise and sustain support, why they adopt the strategies that they do, and what the pressure points are within such movements.

By dealing in stereotypes we may sometimes be as likely to perpetuate cycles of dehumanisation and prejudice, anger and hate, as we are to interrupt them.

In 2011, I set out to get beyond the stereotypes and develop a more textured account of EDL activism. I spent sixteen months basically hanging out with activists from the EDL, March for England and other similar groups in and around London. I attended demonstrations, meetings and social events; chatted with and observed activists via social media and interviewed some of the activists I came to know. This was overt research – they knew I was a sociologist trying to learn more about how they had built and sustained support for their cause. To

start with, some were reticent about my presence, but most were welcoming and even enthusiastic about the research.

Rather than focus on profiling these activists, their attitudes and opinions – research which, while useful on some levels can render a rather static view of activism and activists – I adopted a more dynamic approach, exploring activism as a journey; one that changes people and the way that they think and feel about the world around them and their place in it. There were three things about these journeys in particular which, I believe, have important implications for the way we might think about and respond to the EDL and similar groups.

1. Many people only really became ideologically committed after they had started to become part of the EDL activist community

Belief in the EDL cause was of course an important part of what sustained people's commitment to the group. As one activist explained, 'We've always been told we were wrong. You know what I mean? If I really thought we was that wrong I wouldn't bother stepping out me front door. We have to do it. It takes a lot to like, you know – you have to *believe* in it.'

In some cases activists had formed these beliefs before they became involved. I met a number of people who had spent several years following

and familiarising themselves with the more prominent figures associated with the so-called counter-jihad movement. More common however were stories like that of Bev (a pseudonym). By her own admission Bev had thought little and known even less about Islam, 'militant' or otherwise, until about a month before becoming involved in the EDL. Sure, she had had some general concerns about the way the country was changing and the futures of her children and grandchildren – 'like anyone really' – but she couldn't recall having had particular concerns about Islam. She first heard about the EDL via friends who were always 'banging on about Islam this and EDL that'. One day, after talking with them over a cup of tea, they invited her to a demonstration. She attended, met several activists who were very welcoming – 'Really, you know, not like the hooligans and racists you read in the newspapers' – and became friends with them on Facebook. It was only then that she really threw herself into reading up on the EDL and its cause.

It quickly became clear that in order to make sense of people's journeys into EDL activism it was necessary to go beyond looking at their ideas and ideology – beyond the standard 'radicalisation' model, if you like – to look at other elements. One of these was activists' social networks. A common theme across

the activists I knew was that their initial steps into EDL activism had in one way or another been facilitated by friends and family who were already associated with the movement.

Another element was the emotional rewards – or the emotional energy – of EDL activism. These emotional energies were both negative and positive. Part of what motivated activists' and sustained their commitment were feelings of anger, hatred and fear. But just as important were a range of positive emotions: solidarity, efficacy, the buzz of demonstrations and, of course, pride. Interestingly, as well as the obvious chest-beating flag-waving nationalistic pride, activists also experienced moral pride or dignity, often associated with notions of fulfilling their duty to their country, family and fellow activists.

2. EDL activism means different things to different people

There were plenty of similarities to be found when comparing across the journeys of the activists I knew: their feelings of anger, outrage and solidarity, their shared loathing of the Left, the liberal elite and (militant) Muslims, and so forth. Yet there were also important differences. Some, particularly those who had come to the EDL from conventional far right groups, had wandered into the EDL in



the hope that it would provide them with an avenue for the pursuit of long-held racist and xenophobic agendas, yet many others, particularly those who had previously had quite unremarkable political ideas, tended to cling fiercely to their claimed non-racist identity. Similarly, while all the activists I knew were attracted by the excitement of the EDL and its demonstrations, for some that excitement was very much about 'kicking off' while others found violent incidents and public disorder at demonstrations unnerving, stressful, and even traumatic, undermining their feeling of belonging to the group.

This variation has important implications. First, they should encourage us to be cautious about explanations of support for the EDL and similar groups that attempt to distil it down to just one or two 'key factors'. As Jörg Flecker observes in *Changing Working Life and the Appeal of the Extreme*

Right, where there is clearly 'more than one main path of attraction' to a group or set of political groups it becomes somewhat 'futile [to] argue over the reason' for their expansion.

Second, awareness this variation should also inform thinking about how to respond to groups such as the EDL. While some people involved in these groups may feel intimidated by hostile counter-protests or large-scale policing, others actively seek out such encounters, finding them exciting and emotionally rewarding, and while some would probably never take up an opportunity to sit down and engage in dialogue with policy makers and representatives from other parts of society there are others who will and would even welcome the opportunity to do so. Response strategies are more likely to be effective when they take into consideration the diversity within these groups.

3. EDL activism is more intertwined with the political and social 'mainstream' than some might like to believe.

While it might be comforting and politically expedient to imagine activists in groups such as the EDL to be 'extremists', as people somewhere way out on the margins of society, it is also misleading. Becoming involved in EDL activism often did mean a dramatic change in people's lives: they met new people, forged new friendships, and were introduced to and influenced by ideas, blogs and websites that they might not otherwise have engaged with. Yet activists' belief in and emotional attachments to their cause also developed through everyday encounters with family, neighbours, colleagues, other parents at

their son's football club or their mates in the working men's club down the road. Unlike in more clandestine movements, those involved in the EDL rarely if ever found themselves under pressure from fellow activists to sever ties with people outside the movement, there were no proscribed reading materials, and while they found themselves criticised and shouted down with terms such as 'racist!', 'fascist!' or 'Islamophobia!', they also found what they believed to be their own ideas and arguments played back to them frequently in the mainstream media and in mainstream political discourse. On one level the activists saw themselves as heroic figures, as 'proper patriots', but they also saw themselves, I believe quite genuinely, as 'ordinary English people'.

While it is difficult to provide compelling evidence that generally negative representations of Muslims and immigrants in political, public and media discourses contribute to the emergence of groups such as the EDL, there can be little doubt that they make it easier for the activists in such groups to explain and justify their arguments, both to themselves and to prospective new recruits.

■ JOEL BUSHER is the author of *The Making of anti-Muslim Protest: Grassroots Activism and the EDL*

US racists spread ‘Identitarian’ ideology

From the Southern Poverty Law Centre in Montgomery, Alabama

Several small US hate groups are now stepping up efforts to spread local variants of “Identitarianism”, a movement born in France in recent years and preaching opposition to multiculturalism, often in the form of anti-Muslim xenophobia.

While Identitarian groups

on both sides of the Atlantic claim their opposition to multiculturalism is not racist, their direct action tactics and end aims indicate otherwise.

The Americans’ efforts are particularly aimed at young people, much as in Europe where the movement drew up a “Declaration of War” in 2012 indicting the generation known as “68ers,” a reference

to the French left-wing radicals of 1968.

In the US, some activists have tried to mirror that call by attacking the so-called “baby boomer generation” – those born in the late 1940s and 1950s – for supposedly selling out the country to foreigners but there is little evidence that this version of racist ideology has caught fire.

The American radical right is built entirely around the idea of race whereas the European version increasingly emphasises local ethnic and cultural identities within a European framework — what one French nationalist from Brittany calls the “Europe of 100 flags.”

Still, efforts in the US are multiplying. At least four



American groups are pushing versions of Identitarianism, often parroting the words and the flashy, youth-oriented style of the Europeans.

While the most important, the National Policy Institute, recently held a "Why I'm An Identitarian" essay contest, American Identitarians have not even come close to matching some of the more dramatic efforts of the Europeans, especially when one compares the size and impact of their street demonstrations.

Another group, or perhaps simply an individual, recently started a website called Generation Identity US that claimed to be an American chapter of the French movement. Based in Grovetown, Georgia, the site calls on American youth "to stand up and face the new tyranny that the baby-boomers created for us", decrying attempts "to make one people and culture from all of the people in

the world," the "perverse fantasy of coexistence and miscegenation" allegedly promoted in the mass media and "the tidal wave of mass immigration from non-European countries."

It was forced to change its name when the real Generation Identitaire insisted that the situation in America was different and refused to recognise it as a US branch. The site is now just a single page explaining its changed name, "Identity Vanguard".

A more substantial effort is coming from the National Policy Institute (NPI) whose chief, Richard Spencer, edits the racist *Radix* journal. *Radix* describes itself as working to preserve the "heritage, identity and future of European people in the United States and around the world."

Spencer, like other Identitarians, seeks to present his style of ethno-nationalist regionalism as the very soul of diversity. "Identitarianism

acknowledges the incommensurable nature of different peoples and cultures," he claims, "and thus looks forward to a world of true diversity and multiculturalism."

NPI does more than talk. The group regularly hosts conferences with far right speakers in the US and Europe. Last year, it staged a racist conference in Budapest, titled the "European Identitarian Congress" but, once the event got some advance publicity, the Hungarian authorities stepped in to shut it down, jailing Spencer for five days before deporting him.

Another American group touting Identitarian ideas is the Traditional Youth Network (TYN), headed by Matthew Heimbach and Matthew Parrott. This group does not follow the European Identitarian model so closely but has adopted some key ideas, including the claim it supports all kinds of nationalists.

"We not only seek to build relationships with students of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds," its mission statement says, "but to empower them with the moral support, intellectual foundations, and resources to protect their heritage and identity from the culturally alienated and spiritually bankrupt future that awaits all those who embrace secularism, moral relativism and globalism."

The claim is hogwash. Heimbach regularly interacts with open white supremacists like the Imperial Klans of America, the nazi Golden State Skinheads, *American Renaissance* magazine and the League of the South whose leader recently wrote that the South is "White Man's Land."

Heimbach and Parrot have also authored a six-part essay inspired by the writings of Corneliu Codreanu, the late and unlamented Romanian fascist, killer and Nazi sympathizer.

In one, the pair describe the ideal activists as "warriors

for the Cross," reflecting their emphasis on various strains of Orthodox Christianity, including Greek and Russian, as a basis for racial activism.

That separates their view of Identitarianism from that of their European counterparts, who do not generally see religion as a central issue.

The National Youth Front (NYF) is another group playing with Identitarianism and is the youth wing of the American Freedom Party that includes in its ranks most of the better known white nationalist intellectuals in America.

The NYF is headed by Angelo John Gage who sees the European Generation Identitaire as his inspiration and has been working to spread its ideas on college campuses.

The NYF's first video, "A Declaration of Freedom," is modelled closely on Generation Identitaire's "Declaration of War" video. Both lament the multicultural world young people have inherited from their parents. Earlier this year, NYF posters went up at Arizona State University using the phrase "Declaration of War."

While it is unclear how much success Gage has had in his recruiting efforts, they have been enough to win the attention of some Europeans. He has been invited by Jack Sen of the nazi British National Party to address a fascist gathering in England later this year. An unnamed Swedish group also invited Gage to speak at a future event, but it is unclear if he will attend these gatherings.

This activity is a reflection of increased communication between the American and the European radical right, especially within the younger element, as ideas of a multinational movement to "defend" whites gains ground.

While American Identitarian copycats might not be the most successful propagandists, at least so far, they are part of a racist and anti-Muslim movement that is increasingly international in scope.



Social Democrats defend “their” Vienna against far right

From Martin Jordan in Vienna

THE CENTRE-LEFT Social Democrat Party (SPÖ) won the Vienna state election in October despite sizeable gains by the far right Freedom Party (FPÖ) which recorded its best-ever result in Austria's capital.

The SPÖ, the ruling party in Vienna since 1945, scored 39.59 % and will continue its rule with their long-time mayor Michael Häupl while the FPÖ came in second with 30.79 %. The conservative People's Party (ÖVP) fell to an all-time low of 9.24 %, taking fourth place behind the Greens with 11.84 %, making a continuation of the SPÖ-Greens coalition possible with a total of 54 of the 100 seats in the city council.

Although pre-election opinion polls suggested a neck-and-neck race between SPÖ and FPÖ and even projected a possible FPÖ victory on the back of voter worries about the ongoing refugee crisis, the results are encouraging but nonetheless alarming.

Heinz Christian Strache, FPÖ leader and front-runner in the Vienna election, assessed the results as follows: “Of course we would have preferred a neck-and-neck result, but it didn't happen. Albeit, it needs to be said that this is the worst SPÖ result in history.”

Strache is right about the SPÖ, which is struggling with a drain of its working class electorate towards the FPÖ. Thus, even though the social democrats could defend their sovereignty in Vienna, they once again

left the impression that they face an uphill struggle against the far right.

On election night, the FPÖ had itself celebrated by supporters at a closed event that apparently also included a delegation of the German Nazi National Democratic Party (NPD), which then published the following statements on its Facebook site: “On Sunday, the NPD's Bavaria section was represented with an unofficial delegation at the FPÖ election party in Vienna. The wind of change in Austria is evident everywhere [...] The emotional power that can be drawn out of it to meet the challenges of the future is immeasurable”.

Two weeks earlier, the FPÖ had celebrated an unprecedented election breakthrough in the federal state election in Upper Austria, where it doubled its vote to over 30% and won second place behind the ÖVP (36%). The SPÖ suffered a historic low in this election and was placed third with only 18%. The region's veteran governor, Josef Pühringer (ÖVP), will stay in power but not without making huge concessions to his new coalition partner, the FPÖ.

Post-election surveys in Vienna and Upper Austria indicate that for more than 65% of voters in both instances the current refugee crisis was the main factor in deciding whom to vote for. It is important to understand that in September alone more than 200,000 refugees (mainly from Syria)

entered Austria, most continuing onwards to Germany.

In August, there were more than 8,500 and in September more than 9,000 new asylum claims filed in Austria. The interior ministry recently estimated the total number of asylum claims for 2015 to be 82,500 and projects another 85,000 asylum in 2016. This makes the relative small country of about 8.5 million inhabitants one of the highest refugee recipients in Europe on a per-capita basis.

Especially in the earlier stages the national coalition government, formed by the SPÖ and ÖVP, showed embarrassing incompetence and at times even indifference in dealing with this human crisis. This only fuelled the worries of the general public about Austria's ability to handle such an on-going stream of refugees and added to the FPÖ's fevered anti-migrant scare mongering.

Thus, the FPÖ had an easy chance to conduct emotional, right-wing populist campaigning despite toning down its hateful rhetoric compared with previous campaigns.

The difference, though, between the election campaigns in Vienna and Upper Austria were, that the Viennese SPÖ under the leadership of Häupl did not shy away from a hard-hitting campaign in which “socialist values” and an uncompromising

Front National expecting big gains in regional polls

From Jean-Yves Camus in Paris

FRONT NATIONAL (FN) president Marine Le Pen will lead her party's slate in northern France in regional elections on 6 December.

She is now credited by the polls with 31% on the first ballot and 39% on the second, thus giving the far right a chance to run the powerful regional council unless the Conservatives and the Socialists agree on a common slate between the two ballots – a totally unlikely prospect – or the Socialist Party withdraws from the race, as Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo has suggested.

In Provence in the south of France, the FN is also expected to make big gains.

The candidates' list headed by Marion Maréchal-Le Pen is expected come first on the first ballot, passing the 30% mark, but lose by a slight margin to the Conservatives on the second. Even in the Paris region, where the FN is traditionally weak, opinion polls now give it an all-time high of 21%.

What is astonishing is that the FN can expect to come out of the polls stronger than ever despite last summer's serious internal crisis when his daughter sacked the party's founder and icon, Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Several other cases are pending which could deeply undermine popular

support for a party that claims it is the only one with “clean hands” but which concern alleged financial wrongdoing at the expense of the French state, that is, taxpayers' money.

Jean-François Jalkh, vice-president in charge of legal matters at the FN, and party treasurer, Wallerand de Saint-Just, have been charged for their alleged roles in an elaborate financing scheme that enabled the party and the PR firm that runs the party's campaigns, to receive more State funding than it is allowed to. Saint-Just will lead the FN slate in the Paris area in December.

The offending PR firm is named Riwal



stand for welcoming and helping refugees was put in the forefront.

This refreshing re-orientation to the socialist roots of the SPÖ and the looming threat of Strache becoming mayor of Vienna, mobilised and inspired the SPÖ rank and file in a way not seen for many years.

Häupl managed to convincingly communicate the message "If you want to stop Strache, you need to vote SPÖ" and, in doing so, he effectively reached out to former non-voters and also gained so-called "borrowed votes" from people who might have voted differently if the urgency of stopping Strache had not been the case.

The ÖVP and SPÖ in Upper Austria

and is run by former members of the violent fascist student outfit, GUD. Its boss, Frédéric Chatillon, is also indicted and so is Axel Loustau, one of its shareholders, who also provides part of the stewarding crew at FN events through another of his companies.

Despite these serious charges, Loustau will probably be the number 3 candidate on the Paris slate which could propel him onto the Regional Council. Of course, the FN, Riwal and the above-mentioned individuals strongly deny any wrongdoing and even claim "the system" is prosecuting them to prevent an "historical breakthrough" in the next elections.

Marine Le Pen, who is supporting the Riwal mob against all odds, was also facing court in October in Lyon on charges of inciting racial hatred.

In 2010, during a meeting in the city,

basically did what people are used to from the two "grand old parties" at national level and unsurprisingly continued to lose ground to the FPÖ.

Except for the SPÖ's frontal battle in Vienna, the general trend of the two mainstream parties, the SPÖ and ÖVP, shows an on-going shift towards the right alongside FPÖ successes. The strategy of chasing the FPÖ by moving closer and closer to its position is not only cowardly but also doomed to failure.

Besides the new ÖVP-FPÖ coalition in Upper Austria, a ruling coalition was formed between the SPÖ and FPÖ in Burgenland in July this year. And, within

the ÖVP calls are getting louder for abandoning the coalition with the SPÖ on a national level and bringing the FPÖ back into the federal government. For now this can probably be dismissed as political breast beating since it would discredit the ÖVP beyond repair and wreck the party in early elections, but it is a serious warning sign.

Last time, the ÖVP saw a political lifebelt in the FPÖ and made it a coalition partner at national level in 2000, it resulted in a EU-wide diplomatic freeze-out of Austria and an unprecedented rash of corruption and mismanagement scandals that are still keeping the courts very busy fifteen years on.

she compared Muslim prayers that take place in the streets (because there are few mosques or they are too small) with the German Occupation during World War II. She has chosen to appear in court and use the hearings as a political platform.

Then, what about the ongoing feud between Le Pen Sr. and his daughter? After he was sacked last August, not only from his position as Honorary Chairman but even as a party member, it was widely believed that Jean-Marie Le Pen, now aged 87, had admitted to losing the fight. True, he has not launched a rival party but, in several regions, hardliners who support him and reject Marine's leadership might be able to contest the December elections with their own slate and grab enough votes to deprive the FN of becoming the first party in the polls.

To head off this risk, Marion Maréchal

has agreed to talk with her grandfather so that a few of his devoted fans in the Provence area will at least keep their positions as regional councillors.

In October, Le Pen Sr. announced a challenge to his expulsion in the courts. He wants to be reinstated as an FN member and as Honorary Chairman. He also wants the court to convene before the December election which will wipe out even the slightest prospects of a father-daughter reconciliation.

How those lawsuits will affect the vote of the French remains to be seen. In an opinion poll published in October, Marine Le Pen was forecast to garner 31% in the 2017 Presidential election. That means she would stand in the second ballot against a Conservative or a Socialist candidate. 58% of the French, however, still insist they will never vote for her.

Ups and downs for Greece's extreme right

From Panayote Dimitras for Greek Helsinki Monitor in Athens

WERE GREECE'S
20 September 2015
parliamentary elections a
success for Greece's extreme
right? Yes, one might have
concluded from a quick look
at the results.

The nazi Golden Dawn (GD) remained in third place with even a slight rise in its share of the vote to 7% from 6.3% in the previous 25 January 2015 ballot while the extreme right party Independent Greeks (ANEL) continued to be the radical left SYRIZA's coalition partner in the new government with an additional deputy minister.

A closer look at the results, however, indicates that this first impression is illusory. In an election marred by record abstentions – full 7% higher than in January 2015 – GD actually received fewer votes, indeed the lowest number since its emergence in 2012: 379,581, compared with 388,387 in January and more than 400,000 in the double election of 2012.

Further, ANEL scored worse than ever before, losing 1% and almost 100,000 votes, barely exceeding the 3% threshold required to enter Parliament, with 3.7%. If one adds Orthodox Popular Rally (LAOS), the oldest extreme right party, did not contest the elections after its fourth hammering in January 2015 when it got its lowest-ever 1%, then it is clear that in the recent elections, the extreme right, with less than 11% in all, scored its worst results in the 20-teens.

The fact that SYRIZA insists on coalescing with ANEL as opposed to one of the two centre-left parties affiliated with the Socialists in the European parliament (PASOK and Potami) is a reflection of its idiosyncratic left populism.



This time, the coalition saw the resignation of the additional ANEL deputy minister, Dimitris Kammemos (no relation to ANEL's leader of the same name) within hours after his nomination when social media (but not other parties or traditional media) made viral scores with Tweets of his past extreme antisemitic and homophobic comments. (Such views are prevalent among ANEL politicians, including their leader, but are not expressed with such intensity and frequency.)

The week after the elections, the substantial part of the trial of Golden Dawn, charged with forming a criminal organisation and with specific violent crimes, finally started, almost six months after its formal beginning. The first testimonies were those of

the parents of rapper Pavlos Fyssas, stabbed to death by GD members two years ago.

GD's defence lawyers opted not to question the witnesses, probably to avoid cross-examinations that would damage their clients. The presiding judge has indicated that she will try to find a way to enable hearings to become daily as opposed to one or two per week.

Meanwhile, the media reported in early October that parliament will be asked to lift the immunity of GD leader Nikos Michaloliakos so that he can be referred to trial for incitement to commit crimes.

The case file concerns recorded conversations between Michaloliakos and members of his office from 2011, in which he made threatening and derogatory comments against politicians, journalists and

people in the media who have criticised his party.

What the media failed to report is that the case file was not opened by a prosecutor after the revelation of the video a year ago but that it took an NGO, Greek Helsinki Monitor, to file a complaint with the prosecutor to prod latter into action.

In May 2015, parliament lifted the immunity of GD's parliamentary spokesperson, Elias Kasidiaris, so that he stood trial for incitement to commit crimes during a public speech in an area of Greater Athens, in May 2011, calling on residents to get rid of Roma and migrants who, he said, are "human garbage that rape and commit crimes." Again, publication of his speech did not move the prosecutor who only acted after another Greek Helsinki Monitor complaint.

ANALYSIS EXTREMISM FASCISM RACISM

HOPE

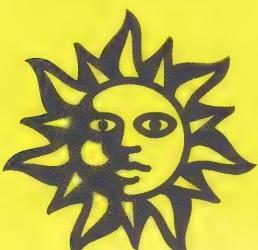
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HOPE camp 2015

John Page reports

IN SEPTEMBER, HOPE not hate (Hnh) took a group of 50 supporters away to a residential centre for a four-day intensive training session in community organising techniques.

The camp was the outcome of Hnh's increasing role in organising communities to defeat the right-wing extremist politics of hatred and division.

As it is obvious that we cannot put a paid organiser into every community in the country, training supporters to organise in their own communities is a priority.

Given the reactive nature of our work and our focus on defeating the British National Party in its electoral heartlands, we have needed to prioritise the areas with the greatest need and been focused around elections. As a result, and simply because of a lack of resources, it has sometimes been difficult to undertake some of the long-term community work that we have always hoped to do.

Hnh's Together initiative, launched in August 2014, was an attempt at proactive community organising aimed at building community networks before any crisis arose.

In Cardiff, Southampton, west London, Dudley and south Essex, Hnh's organisers worked in difficult situations with the aim of defusing community tensions before any crisis arose.

While the Together project was a great success it posed a further challenge: how could we build on the lessons learnt?

The HOPE camp was an attempt to create an improved model of community organising that is not just community based but is also led by activists from within communities themselves.

The 50 lay activists we brought together came from a range of communities. Some were professionals in the field of race equality, others were from the LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex) communities and some were students. The mix had a majority of women and a majority of participants were under the age of 35 (a quarter were under 25) and over a third were from ethnic minority communities.

Coming from Scotland and

Wales and from every corner of England, those taking part were a genuinely diverse group, all with a clear commitment to the values of HOPE not hate

The four-day training course allowed us to pool our collective knowledge and learn new techniques and practices. Almost half of those delivering the training were volunteer activists and the learning involved a combination of techniques: presentations, role-plays, games, films like Selma (about the African American civil rights movement)

HOPE camp attendees enjoy a break from the training





If you are interested in getting involved with HOPE not hate, please contact john@hopenothate.org.uk

and Milk (about the first openly gay elected representative in the United States) and small group discussions.

Each of the four days had a specific theme

On Day One we focused on identifying and assessing situations, looking at the political threats, as well as the shocking media coverage of asylum and refugee issues. We also explored how these national issues were reflected in the experience of participants in their home towns.

On Day Two, we concentrated on building our base (including framing our issues: 'telling our stories', mapping our communities, identifying the "players" in our towns (including who were allies and who were opponents) and organising for equality.

Day Three was centred on developing appropriate strategies and tactics (including choosing issues that are "big enough to matter, but small enough to win", dealing with objections and organising with communities that are harder to reach.

On the final day, we pulled it all together into a coherent plan, practising the use of planning tools and ensuring that individuals took responsibilities for their role within the plan and each participant going away with a plan of action.

One outcome of the camp is that a group of participants has already begun discussing establishing an LGBT+ network, an area where our proactive work has previously been limited, for HOPE not hate.

The event was a great success but, as we face new challenges, as we look forward to developing a bigger and better HOPE camp 2016.



Chatting over a cup of tea

Nick Lowles brews up

EARLIER THIS SUMMER, HOPE not hate published an exclusive investigation into the activities of a group of anti-Muslim activists, desperate to use a Muhammad cartoons exhibition as a cover to push Muslims into violent counter-reaction over insults to their Prophet.

Thanks in part to that exposé, the exhibition was cancelled and chief organiser, Anne Marie-Waters (of Sharia Watch and UKIP) was left to vent her spleen ineffectually, alongside co-conspirator "Tommy Robinson", a sometime English Defence League (EDL) leader, and former EDL financier Alan Ayling, after former Britain First founder Jim Dowson revealed the secret meeting at which all three had discussed the possibility of igniting unrest and disorder.

While it is important to expose and oppose those who incite hatred, it is equally important to work with and between differing communities that could be targeted by extremists – whether they be Muslim, anti-Muslim, far right or any other shade of organised hater – and that's why we came up with the idea for a tea-drinking campaign.

Not the usual stuff of HOPE not hate anti-fascism? Think again. For years, now, we've been working with vulnerable and marginalised communities – white, non-white, religious, non-religious – in target areas up and down the UK. Our aim is to act as a coordinator, allowing ordinary people, who might never otherwise meet, to see one another and understand they all share their local community's best interests at heart.

It is not enough to shout from the barricades and tell people what to do: we have to mix and meet, listen to concerns, before we can bring about change.

"Our Cup of Tea" was born as a response to the attempts to incite by those behind the Muhammad cartoons plot and is being led by Julie Siddiqi, who played a key part in the 'Walk Together' response to the 7/7 10th anniversary.

At its heart are the simple cuppa and a simple concept: let's meet and talk. Already, we've had events where Jewish women have met Muslim women in north-west London on the eve of the



Jewish New Year. There have been "HOPE not hate" cakes baked by female worshippers at a mosque in Leicester for local police and businesses; £500 raised for refugees during a "tea meeting" organised by The Sheba Project in east London; a vicar and imam working together over a pot of tea; whilst former England rugby league player Ikram Butt enjoyed tea with fellow (non-Muslim) fans at an England cricket match against Australia. Former Spurs football boss, Harry Redknapp, has also added his support to the initiative.

And, there are many, many more examples. The point is: we're not claiming a cup of tea will solve the world's problems but not talking will certainly increase chances of division and misunderstanding.

While the social media revolution has been a fantastic innovation in many ways, don't you sometimes just miss the

chance to talk, face-to-face ... to learn something new?

We don't think we should be scared of one another, of talking. And it's by talking we'll forge better understanding – even if we still disagree with one another – and prevent the seeds of fear, hatred and malice even having a chance to take root.

We do not pretend everything is perfect and nor do we believe that is only a question of the ignorant and misguided seeing the light.

We recognize that there are many contentious issues out there and some of the concerns and anxieties between communities, faiths and ideologies are very real and deep.

But the only way we are going to change this is by dialogue and interaction. We can't force people to get along together. Likewise we recognize that, all too often, well-meaning people rarely come into contact with people

A cup of tea leads to a great discovery in Cardiff



ON THE FIRST SATURDAY of every month, the Meeting Room Café pops up in St Teilo's Church in Cathays. Inspired by HOPE not hate's Our Cup of Tea campaign, a group from the Dar Ul-Isra mosque decided to have their weekly meeting at the Meeting Room.

Like everyone who walks through the door, they were welcomed with open arms. And cake. Lots of cake.

A month's supply of cake

Dar Ul Isra mosque is a two-minute walk away from St. Teilo's. The site has an interesting history: once a church hall, it was bombed in the war, then rejuvenated by students in 1989, who bought the land and turned it into an Islamic Centre for prayer, study and community.

The Our Cup of Tea campaign is based on a simple idea. While extremists try to convince us that we are divided, the majority of us are basically having a cup of tea and getting on with things. For the congregation from Dar Ul-Isra, and the hard-working volunteers at The Meeting Room, it was an excuse to meet their neighbours.

Does anyone really need that much of an excuse for a cup of tea?

Chat quickly sparked between the Muslim and Christian congregations at the Church about their shared history in the community. After some interesting discussion, Matthew from the church management team went rustling in the back room for a few minutes. He emerged a few minutes later with the original church hall plans dating to 1908, showing the Muslim congregation for the first time the full history of their Mosque.



It was a piece of shared history neither expected. Mohammed, who invited members of the mosque to the Church, quickly shared the find on the Our Cup of Tea facebook page.

"The whole group from Dar ul Isra were so excited by the find and it created a stronger connection with our Christian neighbours", he said. "We are arranging another visit to go through the archives properly and also get a copy of the original 1908 plans to showcase in our foyer."

Building bridges across our shared history

Amazing what a cup of tea can do. When organising a large voter registration campaign in Cardiff last year, both the mosque and the church acted as bases for HOPE not hate volunteers to meet for door knocking sessions and getting people registered in the local community. This was the first time the different congregations had had the chance for a sit down for a proper cuppa.

In the process it has led to a shared sense of history, a lasting link in the community and, hopefully, many more cups of tea.



from different communities or with those who hold very different ideas. "Our Cup of Tea" is an attempt to change that.

So while the cartoon exhibition was cancelled, we went ahead with this initiative, even in a more limited form. It was a statement of intent about how we plan to operate and engage in the future.

These sorts of community engagements are as much an anti-racist or anti-fascist act as going on a demonstration or leafleting a community. They are about winning hearts and minds, engaging with ordinary people and changing minds through direct engagement.

So why not take a cup of tea with someone new from your local community this autumn? Builder's brew or Earl Grey, mint tea or herbal, it doesn't really matter. Enjoy your cuppa and find new friends out there in your community.

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